THE MUSIC CRADLE OF BIRZEBBUGA



Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa A.D.1990







ONLINE PUBLICATION OF OUR HISTORY



Dedicated to all those, living and dead,
who have in some way or another
been part of the establishment
and the life of the Society,
from the concept of
its foundation to today,
their families and
those who are yet to come.

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A MUSICAL CRADLE FOR THE BIRZEBBUGA LOCALS

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A MUSICAL CRADLE FOR THE BIRŻEBBUĠA LOCALS

t was Thursday the 5th of July 2018, a month prior to the titular feast dedicated to Saint Peter the Apostle. On that day, the Soċjetà Filarmonika, San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa gave farewell to one of its six founders, Raymond Cutajar. Whilst I was on the pavement during the funeral procession, as it passed in front of the premies, I started thinking to myself "one of us has left us "we lost one of us"... and hence I had a thought which is now in your hands, dear reader.

The titular feast passed, and during a moment of relaxation at the band club's bar, me and my wife Marouska started a conversation with Secretary Henry Bonnici and Treasurer Walter Pace, during which I spoke to them about the idea. Both of them liked the idea, so much so that they informed me that the band club had made attempts to publish this book previously, all of which never materialised for various reasons. They informed President Alexander Caruana, who enthusiastically started contacting people such that the book could obtain the neccessary funds for it to be published.

I had just been appointed as the band club's editor and its teacher for music theory, and I had doubts whether I was ready to commit to the level of work that a book of this calibre requires. We started slowly, looking at minutes and publications, especially the book that the band club publishes for the titular feast, as well as numerous pictures.

Despite the research covering a span of 30 years, I had thought that it would be an easy job since I am used to researching. All the research was done with a sense of honesty and everything done was transparently exhibited to the Central Committee. My wife Marouska provided me with a lot of support and help, during the difficult times of the pandemic, in 2020, as well as in the early stages of her pregnancy and upbringing of our daughter Petra. I also thank the first President, Founder and Benefactor Anthony Camilleri, who welcomed me at his residence and provided me with various pictures and copies of documents from his time leading the band club. With the help of Andy Mifsud and Jonathan Bonnici we could also produce photos from the band club's vast archives. Nicola Bonnici Mc Intyre and my wife Marouska joined the project later on to help with the arrangement of the photos such that the book could be published in time. A huge thank you is also due to Secretary Henry Bonnici who always promptly provided us with anything we asked for, be them minutes, copies of the statute or help in any other form. Treasurer Walter Pace, gave us his support from behind the scenes with words of courage and the hope that this formidable team could

finish the publication in time, whilst President Alexander Caruana also supported us such that this publication is now finished. Marisa Cutajar helped us with proof reading pro bono and Kevin Barun helped us with the editing and printing. Lastly, I also thank God Almighty, Our Mother Mary and Saint Peter Apostle who guided us in this project, especially during difficult times when we were losing hope. I also thank the foundation Gal Xlokk as this publication could only be possible with a scheme to support the nation's cultural heritage, a scheme supported by the project LEADER for the Rural Development Program 2014-202 as part of the responsibilities under the Ministry for European Affairs and Equality. I chose to research using the band club's minutes as these are realistic documents, and products of discussion, at times being long and difficult, which describe a way forward for the band club. The minutes encapsulate only what is discussed, regardless if it is what people want or don't want to hear and read, and hence this led me to make this decision. It was preferable to take the longer route, and study these documents than rely on word of mouth, as the latter could have variations from factual reality or missing details which had been forgotten due to events having happened some time back.

CRADLE

The title of the book includes the word cradle because it reminds me of a traditional childhood, a childhood without worries, a childhood without fears, a childhood without complexities and in other words an innocent childhood. Who knows how many children, youths, women, men and elders visited the premises or otherwise formed part of the band club in the thirty years of its existence for the band club to have made the advances and overcame the challenges which make it what it is today. A band club which over 30 years ago, with the effort of six individuals got out of the cot, started walking and is today an adult adorned with values, enthusiasim, experience and the respect from various communities around the world. The cradle isn't always present in one's life but is just a small part of one's lifetime, and when one outgrows it, one starts facing the good and the bad aspects of life. The cradle in which this band club was born didn't last long, and there were efforts to prevent the band club from even being established, because the band club had to commit to its work from the get go. The cradle however was, still and will always be in service. It will welcome anyone who wants to follow it, to join it and to grow with it... in every sense.

MUSICAL

The main aim of the band club is a musical one; hence the inclusion of the word "philarmonic" with Romantic roots, from the name Philammon, who was a brilliant musician in Greek mythology, which talent he had inherited from his father Apollo. I would have liked to add more titles to the name of this book such as cultural, philanthropic, pyrotechnic and so on and so forth because the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa delves into a lot of aspects. However, the title of this publication couldn't be that broad because it would have been too verbose, and hence I limited myself to the main aim of the band club, music. Through music, especially via its Musical Director, teacher and musicians, the band club can be recognised from other organisations which which fulfil different aims. It was

through music that the band club made a name for itself in Birżebbuġa, other localities and abroad. It was through music that the band club praised Saint Peter year after year after year. Nevertheless, the band club welcomes everyone, even those who aren't interested in music. Proof of this is the significant number of fireworks enthusiasts who follow the band club's exhibitions in Birżebbuġa and elsewhere, those who ask for a copy of the annual publication for the annual feast, those who ask about its theatrical productions and so on and so forth.

OF THE BIRŻEBBUĠA LOCALS

The band club was born and grew in Birżebbuġa despite the work it also does in other localities and abroad. It represents Birżebbuġa everywhere it goes, bearing its name everywhere it is, and proudly exhibiting the local talent everywhere it is seen and heard. It is Birżebbuġa's band club, the band club which from this locality has gone around the nation and also abroad.

THE NAME WHICH ISN'T INCLUDED

The name which I didn't include in the title of this publication is an integral part of the band club's work. He is the most important part of this work. He is included in the name of the band club. He is the thought behind the establishment of the band club. I am naturally referring to the patron Saint Peter Apostle in Chains; whom the band club worships. I didn't include him in the title because he is too obvious, he is included in every document and picture, in every word in this book because the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa is Birżebbuġa's , and Birżebbuġa is Saint Peter's, hence automatically, the band club is Saint Peter's before anything else.

In your hands, you hold a book, an almanac, a collection of stories, all important, some of which are sad whilst others are joyful but all of them form a microcosmic journey which started from a dream, was born in the cradle, grew and sustained itself through music and became an intrinsic part of the Birżebbuġa locals' lives.

I thank everyone who was part of this work. There are various people who aren't mentioned nor do they appear in a picture, however, the story of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa wouldn't be the same without their participation. If I forgot to mention someone or something, I ask for empathy and forgiveness.

I hope you enjoy reading this book as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Christopher Bonnici B.A.(Hons); M.A.; ALCM; LLCM July 2021

BIRŻEBBUĠA AND THE DAWN OF A VILLAGE FEAST

he emancipation of this village, in the South of Malta, goes back thousands of years. Without exaggerating, this village gave birth to the human civilisation of our island. A visit to Għar Dalam will give us evidence that our islands were part of the island of Sicily and the first inhabitants of Malta arrived from this Italian island around 5000 BC¹. Along the years, the picturesque village of Birżebbuġa was sought both as a summer residence as well as a fishing village. There is evidence that during the summer days, people preferred to leave their residential houses in nearby villages and reside in Birżebbuġa to enjoy the quiet summer nights.² However, many more years had to pass for Birżebbuġa to acquire its identity as a distinct locality. Other villages had been celebrating their village feast for many years, but Birżebbuġa despite being the cradle of civilisation remained only a summer residence. No one was able to say that he is a son or daughter from the land of olives³ or as Luigi Rosato, a writer from Birgu who wrote about Birżebbuġa, from the land that heals all diseases.⁴

If we go back to the 17th century we find information about a mass as well as the First Vespers that were held in the medieval chapel dedicated to St George the Martyr on the 23rd of April, while on the 1st of May, the clergy and the *fratelli* from the parish of Zurrieq used to organise a devotional procession to this chapel.⁵

¹ Friggieri O. (2009); *II-Poeżija Maltija*; Malta University Publishers, Malta, p. 11-12

² Guillaumier A. (2002); Bliet u Rħula Maltin; Klabb Kotba Maltin, Malta, p. 89

³ ibid.; p. 91

⁴ Friggieri O. (2009); *II-Poežija Maltija*; Malta University Publishers, Malta, p. 11-12

⁵ Ciantar N. (2012); Kappelli Maltin;

The feast's external celebrations as we know them today, began in the 19th century. However, these were small celebrations that were held internally and externally near the respective chapel. Although Birżebbuġa was not a parish yet, some of those who had a summer residence decided to move to this picturesque village for good. These summer residents used to enjoy the peaceful environment this village offered at the time. Thanks to these new residents, Birżebbuġa became an autonomous parish on the 9th of September 1913.

In the 19th century, the two chapels that were found at St George's Bay, the one dedicated to St Joseph and the other dedicated to Mary Help of the Christians, used to celebrate a feast on the fourth Sunday of July and in May respectively. The chapels and the nearby streets were decorated for this occasion as well. Another feast that was celebrated was that around the chapel of the Holy Family which is found in Zurrieq Road, and of St Angelo, a Carmelite martyr, that was celebrated in Hal Far. The only feast that is still being celebrated nowadays, and so it's also a nostalgic memory, is that dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, celebrated on the 8th of December in Benghisa.⁶

Apart from these feasts, Birżebbuġa continued to attract band clubs and other people from all over the country, mainly to organize fairs and other activities. In these events, the band clubs used to play marches and waltzes to celebrate the occasion.⁷ The population continued to increase and now the residents had one wish; to celebrate a feast that brings all the community together.

The church dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows was solemnly blessed by Bishop Pietro Pace on the 14th of August 1907. The titular statue of Our Lady of Sorrows made in papier-mâché, was donated by Canon Achille Refalo and arrived in the village on the 17th of August 1910. The church is the result of joining two barns that were the property of Anġ Cassar. The Doric-style façade was constructed later and completed in 1912.8 The titular feast of Our Lady of Sorrows started to be held on the third Sunday of September, in order to be near the date of the 15th of September, the day of the liturgical feast of Maria Addolorata. For the occasion, the orchestra San Andrea from Luqa used to come and play, while the streets and the bay were decorated and fireworks were fired. The facade of the church was illuminated using various cups with oil. The band club that used to be invited was L-Unjoni from Luqa. On the 9th of September 1913, Bishop Pietru Pace issued a pastoral letter which was read in all churches of the Maltese diocese, and declared Birżebbuġa a Parish, while on the 16th of September 1913, Fr. Karm Bugelli from Cospicua became the first Parish PrieSt

⁶ Ghaqda Storja u Kultura Birżebbuġa (2008); Birżebbuġa u I-Festa Tagħha Matul is-Snin, feature prepared for the occasion of Jum Birżebbuġa 2008

⁷ ibid

⁸ Guillaumier A. (2002); p. 101

The external celebrations for the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows continued to grow and attract more people thanks to Fr. Anġ Fenech. In fact, on the day a ġostra was organised at Pretty Bay, as well as swimming and boat races. It was a feast that managed to bring a sense of communal spirit, and although it was a small celebration compared to those that are held today, it was the beginning and thanks to it nowadays the people of Birżebbuġa can appreciate the work of our ancestors.

On the 29th of August 1926, Bishop Mauro Caruana solemnly laid the foundation stone of the second parish church, since the church dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows became too small for the increasing population. The new parish church was dedicated to Saint Peter the Apostle. There was a lack of consensus on this change and due to other factors, such as the building of the new parish church and lack of enthusiasm from the residents, the first years of the feast of St Peter (the Relique of the Saint arrived in 1937) held on the first Sunday of August, had little popularity compared to the previous feaSt¹¹

After the end of the Second World War, Carmelo Axiaq expressed the wish to have a titular statue of St Peter; his wish came true on the 29th of December 1947. Since Birżebbuġa didn't have a band club, the new statue of St Peter (today nicknamed 'iż-żgħir' - the small one) was accompanied by the St Catherine's band club from Żurrieq from its arrival at St George's Bay to the parish church. The people of Birżebbuġa began accepting the fact that now Saint Peter was the new patron saint and the enthusiasm for the feast continued to grow, while celebrations both internally and externally continued to also grow. New decorations, especially ornamental flags (bandalori), decorated the village square and Pretty Bay. The orchestra that performed in the church was under the direction of Lorenzo Gonzi and later under Frankie Diacono, the son of Carlo Diacono.

However, what was missing was the establishment of a local band club. On the 25th of August 1957 the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen was founded with Carlo Zammit being the first Musical Director.¹²

Two years later, when Fr. Gużepp Minuti was Parish Priest, the titular statue of St Peter was carved in wood by Ferdinando Stuflesser in Ortisei, in the province of Bolzano, and brought to Birżebbuġa. Over the years various individuals and organisations contributed to embellish this artistic jewel considered by most critics to be one of the most beautiful statues in Malta. In 1974 the titular statue was gilded, and in the early 1980s new chains in silver were added. In the same decade, a new bench (bankun) and platform (bradella) were

⁹ Għagda Storja u Kultura Birżebbuġa (2008)

¹⁰ Bonnici C. (2004); *Kunċetti tal-Festa Popolari fil-Letteratura Maltija*; Mini thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts in Maltese Literature (Hons.) at the University of Malta p. 3

¹¹ Għaqda Storja u Kultura Birżebbuġa (2008)

¹² Grech J. (2001); Il-Każini tal-Baned f'Malta u Għawdex; PEG, Malta, p. 63

produced and used. The works on the bench, having bronze bas-reliefs on all four sides, were completed in 2005. On the 19th of July 1969, Archbishop Mikiel Gonzi blessed a set of bells that were produced in the Netherlands. They helped to improve the atmosphere all year round, and especially during the feast for Saint Peter, thanks to their sweet intonated chimes.¹³

Externally, the feast continued to gain popularity and grow with the arrival of Parish Priest Fr. Karm Frendo. During the two years he served as a parish priest new sets of ornamental banners, valances and flags (pavaljuni and bandalori) were added and embellished the streets of Birżebbuġa. Also, the morning march was introduced as well as the demonstration on the sea with the statue of St Peter on the Third day of Tridum. Afterwards, the statue goes around the village and is raised on a pedestal in the main square of Birżebbuġa. This demonstration, unique in the Maltese islands, was done to remember what happened in 1974 when the titular statue of St Peter was brought back on a boat from gilding (work done by Vincenzo Apap). The same happened in 2017 when the statue was restored again and brought back by a boat. After going round the streets of Birżebbuġa the statue was blessed on the parvis by Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna. 15

In the 1980s, various fireworks enthusiasts joined their efforts so that during the feast week Birżebbuġa could also have a pyrotechnic display. They used to fire from fields nearby, but also from a barge at Pretty Bay. All this helped to create a fantastic atmosphere, especially during the procession with the statue of Saint Peter on Sunday.¹⁶

Various events that happened between the end of 1989 and the first months of 1990, explained in the next chapter, led to the foundation of a second band club in Birżebbuġa. The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was founded on the 14th of January 1990 under the musical direction of Mro. Michael Bugelli.

From then the titular feast saw a rapid increase in external activities, especially in pyrotechnic works, ground mechanical fireworks, and also in the festive atmosphere during the marches. Every year, lots of people from all over the island, and also foreigners, fill the streets and bays of Birżebbuġa creating a festive atmosphere and making the *festa* dedicated to the apostle St Peter in Vincula an exhilarating and exciting place to be.

¹³ Caruana A. (2009); *Minn Qalb I-Iljuni*; p. 138

¹⁴ Għagda Storja u Kultura Birżebbuġa (2008)

¹⁵ Gauci Cunningham A. (2017); San Pietru rrestawrat se jivjaģģa fuq il-baħar bejn M'Xlokk u Birżebbuġa; taken from www.illum.com.mt) (20th of July 2017)

¹⁶ Għagda Storja u Kultura Birżebbuġa (2008)

The Chapel dedicated to the Immaculate Conception in Benghijsa, decorated for the feaSt



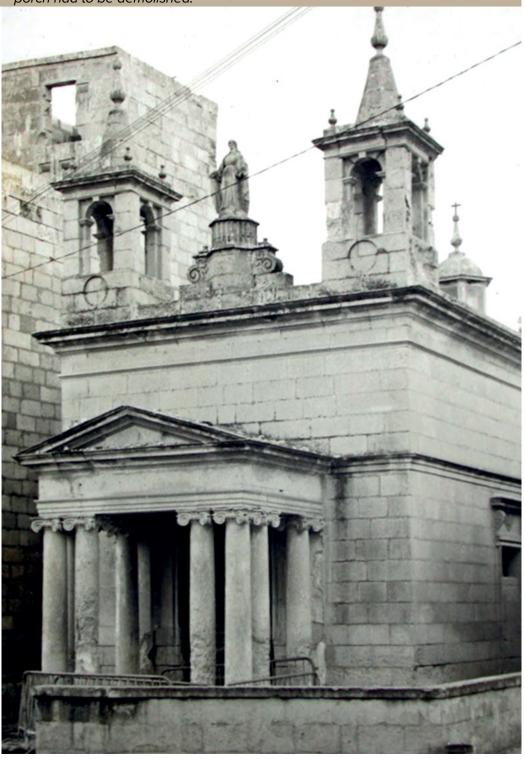
The titular painting of the Chapel dedicated to Mary Help of Christians

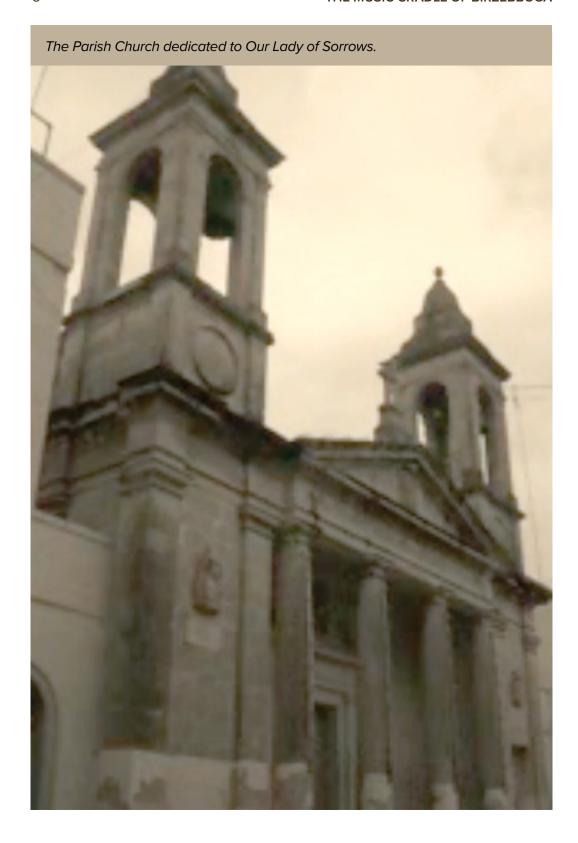


The Chapel dedicated to Mary Help of Christians decorated for the feaSt In the photo one can also see some of the old decorations that were used.



The Chapel dedicated to the Holy Family before the bell tower and the front porch had to be demolished.





One of the fairs that used to be organised along the Birżebbuġa seaside.

A view of St George's Bay years back.



Fr. Spiridione Penza.

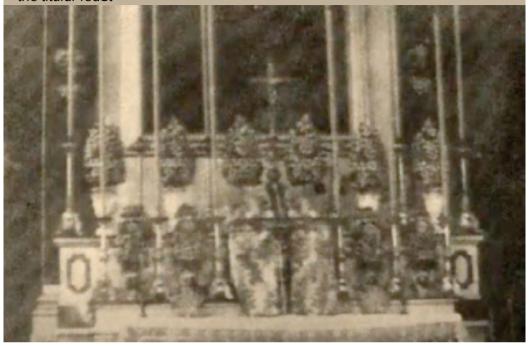




Orchestra San Andrea from Luqa that used to participate in the internal feast celebrations dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows.



Detail of the altar in the church dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows decorated fot the titular feaSt



The statue of Our Lady of Sorrows on the day of the titular feaSt Since there was no electricity, cups with oil were attached to the columns.





Part of the fireworks that used to be fired for the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.





Pretty Bay with the church dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows in the background.





Fr. Karm Bugelli with the first Birżebbuġa parishioners.



Part of the decree that promoted the newly-built church dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows to the dignity of an autonomous and independent parish.



ARCIVESCOVO DI RODI VESCOVO DI MALTA

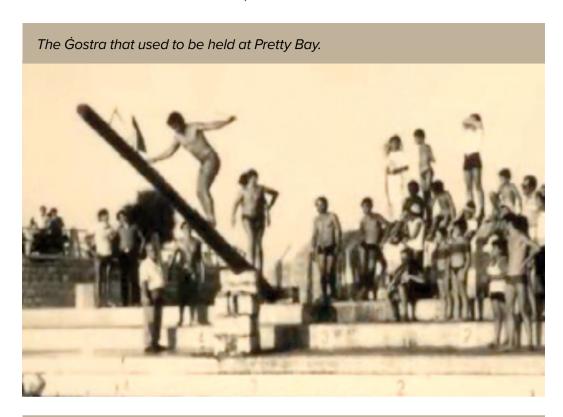
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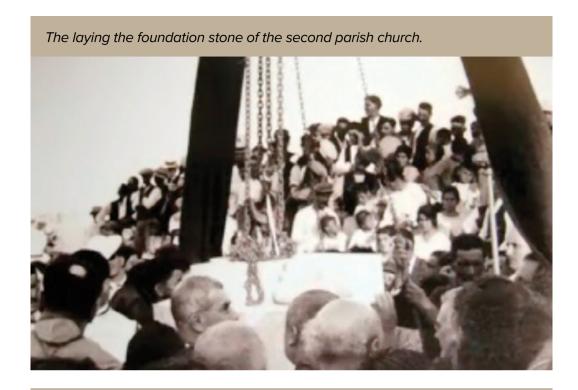
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etc.

Ven. Fratelli e Figli carissini nel Signore, Capitolo, Clero e Popolo, Salute e Benedizione







The titular painting of Our Lady of Sorrows that used to be found in the first parish church. Today it's cherised in the Parish Office.



Bishop Mauro Caruana who recommended that the new church be dedicated to Saint. Peter the Apostle.

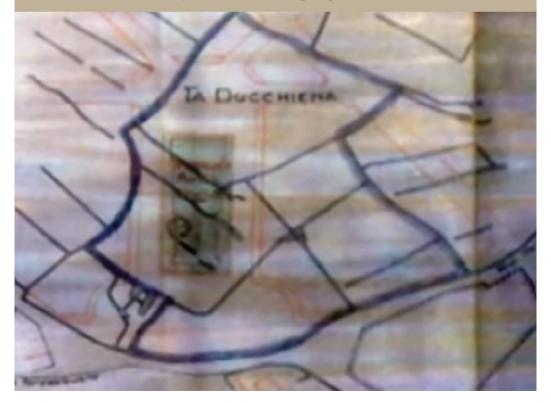


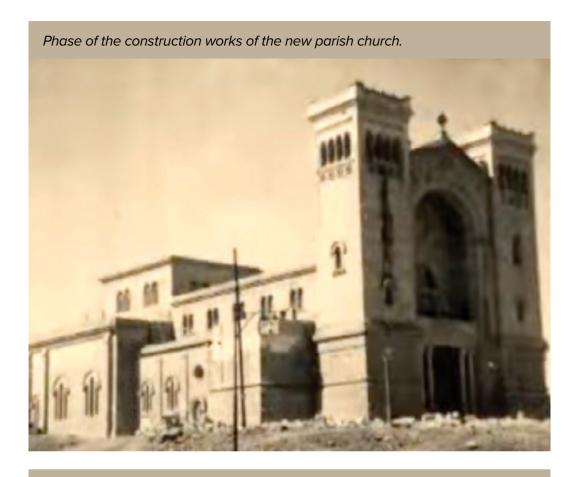


Bishop Mauro Caruana solemnly laid the foundation stone of the second parish church.



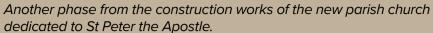
The land where the new parish church was going to be built.





Pretty Bay mid 20th century.







The procession for the feast of St Peter the Apostle. Since a statue hadn't been made, the procession was held with the relic.





The first statue for Saint Peter the Apostle on the 29th of December 1947 passing from Birżebbuġa Road on its way towards the Parish Church. It is accompanied by people from Birżebbuga and Banda Santa Katarina from Żurrieg.

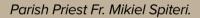




The first statue of Saint Peter the Apostle on the day of the titular feaSt









Mro Lorenzo Gonzi – Maestro di Cappella.







Mro Carlo Diacono – the composer of the antiphon Solve Jubente Deo that was sung till 1978.



The arrival of the titular statue of Saint Peter the Apostle in Birżebbuġa in 1959.

Part of the parish church decorated for the feast of St Peter. The altar is the same one that was used in the old parish church.



Banda L'Unione from Luqa, under the directon of brothers Gavino and Ferdinando Camilleri that used to participate during the external celebrations for the titular feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

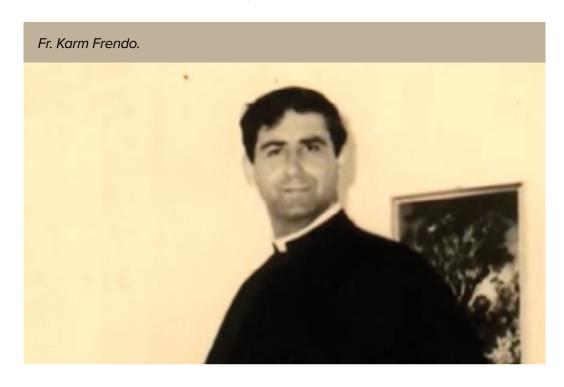


Ferdinand Stuflesser, the sculptor of the new titular statue of St Peter.



One of the first processions with the titular statue of Saint. Peter the Apostle.





Fr. Karm Frendo raised on the shoulders during the morning march.



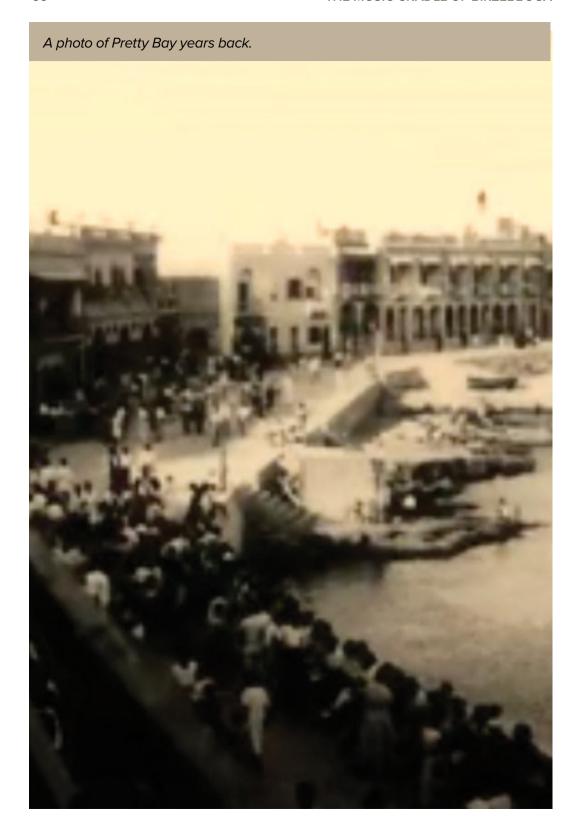


One of the Translazzjoni rituals of the titular feast when Fr. Minuti was the Parish PrieSt



The old statue of Saint Peter on the parvis in 1997 to commemorate its 50th anniversary.





2

WHAT LED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SECOND MUSICAL SOCIETY IN BIRŻEBBUĠA

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

n 1957 the first musical entity in Birżebbuġa was established, the Banda San Pietru. Compared to other towns and cities, 1957 is a contrastingly recent date, when one considers that some musical societies had been close to celebrating 100 years from their establishment at the time. However, when one considers a perspective from the locality of Birżebbuġa, which became an autonomous parish in 1913, with the feast of Saint Peter being celebrated for the first time in 1937, 1957 is just 20 years after the first celebration of the feast dedicated to Saint Peter, and hence, 1957 taken in this context is a year relatively early in the development of the titular feast; something which shows the keen desire the locals had to expand the feast dedicated to the Apostle Saint Peter externally.

At the end of the 1960s, the Banda San Pietru was dormant for some years. Nevertheless, it started operating once again at the start of the 1970s. It was also a time when in Birżebbuġa there was also a Festive Committee, which was the entity responsible for the comprehensive organisation of the external feaSt The local band would be invited by this committee to provide its services, as was done with band clubs outside of the locality. This model is still used for example for the feast of Saint Lawrence (Vittoriosa), and Saint George (Qormi). This committee was led by the Parish Priest, who at the time was Fr. Ġużepp Minuti. The committee also subsidised a substantial part of the expenses incurred by the services provided by the Banda San Pietru.

During its early years, the Banda San Pietru only played on Saturday, the Eve of the Titular FeaSt It was in 1979 when Fr. Karm Frendo, as the Parish Priest leading the Festive Committee, expressed the desire for a march to be held on Friday, the third day of the Tridum and also for a

march to be held on the morning of the Titular FeaSt The Festive Committee, given that it had increased the number of musical services, also increased the remuneration to the Banda San Pietru which was invited to play these new services.

TROUBLE STARTS BREWING

In 1986, when the Parish Priest was Fr. Pawl Buttigieg, the Banda San Pietru's Committee wrote to the Festive Committee asking to start getting paid Lm600 instead of Lm500 because the expenses related to band musicians had increased. The Festive Committee felt that it should not grant the Lm100 increase and hence, the Committee for the Banda San Pietru was on the brink of cancelling the morning march on the day of the feaSt. The news spread fast and wide, and the youths of the Catholic Action collected Lm100 and gave it to the Banda San Pietru so that the morning march could proceed as usual. From the following year onwards, the Festive Committee paid the Banda San Pietru Lm600 from the start.

From that point onwards, the relationship between the Festive Committee on one side and the Banda San Pietru on the other started progressively deteriorating. At the time, the band's committee was exclusively responsible for the organisation and formation of the band and hence, the festive material, the routes, the times, the purchasing and setting off of fireworks as well as the statue which was used during the demonstration on the third day of the Tridum were all responsibility and property of the Festive Committee, and hence the parish, rather than that of the band club. Given that the fireworks have been mentioned, even the fireworks which were set off from the roof of the band club were paid for by the Festive Committee! Up to this point, some members of the Festive Committee would be the same people who also occupied positions on the Committee for the Banda San Pietru, however in light of the increasing tension between the two parties, the Committee for the Banda San Pietru had amended the statute such that someone who formed part of the Festive Committee could not form part of the Banda San Pietru's Committee and vice versa. This decision led to even more tension, and the division between the two committees was greatly felt. This also led to the Festive Committee, the principal organiser of the feast, finding another alternative location to set off fireworks such that no one got the impression that the fireworks were being paid for by the Banda San Pietru.

NEW BLOOD JOINS THE BANDA SAN PIETRU

At the time, two new faces came to light in the Committee for the Banda San Pietru, Anthony Camilleri who was appointed Treasurer and his assistant Jason Vella. Along with them, a significant number of youths started frequenting the band club. Also at the time, the Banda San Pietru celebrated 30 years from its establishment, since five years back it could not celebrate 25 years from its establishment due to structural refurbishments. Despite this, the pettiness between the Festive Committee and the Banda San Pietru's Committee was still being felt. Furthermore, in 1987 a General Election was held and there was a democratic change in the Maltese Government. Some feast enthusiasts felt that the celebrations for the thirty-year anniversary were politically motivated, and this led to some people feeling irritated.

THE MORNING MARCH IN 1988

The festivities during the marches would reach their pinnacle In Birżebbuġa Street, the street where today there is the band club 'Ġawhra San Pietru', at the time known as 'Id-Dar tat-Tabib' (The Doctor's House). This made sense because most of the equipment used for the festivities would be in the Catholic Action's premises, which also had decorations, especially for its premises. The supporters who were taking part in the festivities wanted the march to keep going until 1:00 p.m. and organized a sit-down such that the band continues playing and goes to the main square so that the march ended as usual. However, the leadership of the Banda San Pietru decided that the march would stop where it was at 10:00, as per the agreed time, and this resulted in the march not going to the main square. At that moment trouble boiled over and huge protests were held with numerous youths even protesting inside the Banda San Pietru premises. All of them were suspended from being members of the Banda San Pietru.

THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY FROM THE PARISH'S ESTABLISHMENT

Around a month

later, on the 9th of December 1988, the Birżebbuġa parish organized a special feast on the occasion of 75 years from its establishment. Amongst other things, Archbishop Ġużeppi Mercieca did a Pontifical and the parish invited the Banda San Pietru, as the only local band club to organise a march around the streets of the parish for the occasion. Several enthusiasts asked for the Popular Hymn dedicated to Saint Peter to be played on this special day, with the decision being taken however that it is not played. The youths, once again, refused to accompany the band in protest, and the band marched the streets on its own however at the end of the march the youths took to the church stairs in the main square and sang the popular hymn. In order to deescalate the situation, the young Alexander Caruana went to talk to Ċikku Schembri the Sacristan and asked him to talk to the Secretary of the Banda San Pietru, who was Martin Zammit at the time, so that the band plays the popular Hymn dedicated to Saint Peter. The Secretary asked the band's Director Mro. Frank Galea who conceded that it is played.

LEGITIMATE MOVEMENTS FOR CHANGES IN THE BANDA SAN PIETRU

The situation didn't improve. To add insult to injury a disagreement arose between Treasurer Anthony Camilleri and the rest of the Banda San Pietru's Committee. Camilleri would bring his wife's brother to play the trumpet without remuneration, whilst Secretary Martin Zammit would bring his neighbour who would be remunerated. Camilleri insisted that neither should be paid, and the committee did not agree with him. Anthony Camilleri resigned from Treasurer and so did his assistant Jason Vella. From his end, Anthony Camilleri started planning for the incorporation of new members such that they replace the committee of the day.

THE 1989 FEAST

After the 1988 feast, several individuals from Birżebbuġa had approached Alexander and his brother Joseph Caruana asking them to join the festive committee. This was a time during which the external feasts in Malta and Gozo had started to grow and instead of the festivities lasting three days, they started being spread across more days. This was Alexander's plan for the Birżebbuġa feast, despite knowing that it was going to be a piece of work of immense

difficulty. In February 1989, some members of the Festive Committee started going door to door to collect funds for the feaSt When Alexander Caruana knocked on the first door in Tria tas-Sebħ, a woman opened the door and told him 'you come for the envelope but you give us neither festive lights nor band music'. In shame, Alexander did not know what to tell her. Cikku the Sacristan had also gone to talk to her; however, the same message was being received from multiple households. The enthusiasts went back home, saddened but resolved to see what could be done to improve the feast and to reach other areas which weren't usually reached. Alexander Caruana took the initiative and spoke to his brother Joseph Caruana, Jason Vella and Joseph Pace so that they start collecting funds and organise a march in the area called 'tal-Papa' on the third day of the Tridum. The Festive Committee found no objection to the collection of the funds, however, Alexander Caruana maintains that the Parish Priest Fr. Pawl Buttigieg had discouraged him by telling him that if the funds collected were insufficient, he would have to personally make good for the outstanding balance. Anthony Camilleri had gotten wind of this initiative and sent for Alexander Caruana, and despite the disagreement he had on a personal basis with the Banda San Pietru, he suggested that the local band club still be invited 'because the people enjoy the local band the most'. Caruana went to talk to Secretary Martin Zammit who immediately accepted the invite and asked that a letter be sent to the Committee to formalise the matter. The original concept was that the march ends in Saint Philip Street, however the committee for the Banda San Pietru expressed the desire that the march ends in front of the church and that the band club covers any additional expenses. The march was held and it was a massive success. Not only were the funds collected sufficient to cover the expenses of the march but with the extra funds collected, an enormous number of fireworks were purchased which were set off during the march, especially in Saint Phillip Street and the main square. In the same year, during the evening of Feast Day, after the procession and the Sacramental Blessing ended, some band musicians came of their own accord, some of them from Marsaxlokk, so that for the first time a march was held for the end of the feaSt This initiative was Spiridione Camilleri's. Peter Cassar's and some other individuals'. This initiative led to increased enthusiasm to make the feast a bigger one.

THE TENTATIVES IN THE BANDA SAN PIETRU CONTINUE - RESULT IN THE NEGATIVE

Anthony Camilleri continued encouraging people to become members of the Banda San Pietru, with his personal situation with the same band club not getting any better. One of the new members was Alexander Caruana, who was still not eighteen years old and hence couldn't be accepted as a member, however as recognition for the fundraising for the march on Thursday, he was promised that he would be accepted as a member nevertheless. Around this time, Caruana started learning music at the same band club. Also around this time, he was contacted by Anthony Camilleri to contest for Secretary of the Banda San Pietru, but he declined because he was still young and had immense respect towards the Secretary of the Banda San Pietru, Martin Zammit, who from his end, even as a colleague at work had taught him several things such that when he retires, Caruana takes over from him. The rumour spread that Alexander Caruana was contesting Martin Zammit for Secretary during the General Meeting of January 1990.

NEW CLAUSE IN THE STATUTE FOR THE BANDA SAN PIETRU

Around 1988/1989 disagreements had arisen between the Parish Priest Fr. Pawl Buttigleg and the young Alexander Caruana, with the main reason being the lack of agreement on the expansion of the external feaSt Caruana wanted a youth group for decorations to be set up as part of the Festive Committee, however, Parish Priest Buttigleg didn't approve. These disagreements sometimes even boiled over in the sacristy, with Alexander telling the Parish Priest that if he wasn't allowed to form this group he would form a new band club. Another anecdote was on the 22nd of February when the Parish Priest Buttigleg didn't allow for the setting off of the musketry from the church's rooftop with numerous enthusiasts setting them off on the church's parvis instead. After the 1989 feast, which was the last feast to see the participation of the Banda San Pietru on its own, Alexander Caruana started frequenting the band club, and various members encouraged him to contest for the band club's committee. One of the times, the Treasurer asked him to hand back the copy of the statute he had given him. Caruana did what he was asked the following week, he was handed back the statute with a paper on the inside of its cover titled 'Amendments and Addendums to the Statute'. Despite this having the official signature of the band club, it was neither dated nor was an Extraordinary General Meeting held for the members to approve these amendments and addendums. One of the amendments was that for a member to contest for the band club's committee, one would have had to be a member for at least a year. Caruana took offence to this because he had on one hand been contacted to form part of the committee and on the other found the door being closed in his face. He felt that this change was done to ensure that he didn't contest for Secretary even though Caruana never thought of doing so. Therefore, he went to talk to Anthony Camilleri who encouraged him to not give up and to continue working so that the changes which were needed in the Banda San Pietru were effected.

In this period, numerous new band clubs were being established around Malta. Amongst these, we mention the Banda Sant' Antnin in Birkirkara (1983) and the Banda Anici in Qormi (1988), the two band clubs in Kalkara and the band club in Fgura. Hence when Alexander Caruana went to speak to Anthony Camilleri, he asked if the same could be done in Birżebbuġa. Camilleri told him that it would be difficult and that it would be better if the situation in Birżebbuġa didn't get to that. Camilleri had been involved in the band club's committee for a long time and he had extensive experience on how a band club was to be administered and how it should get the needed funds. From his end, Caruana spoke to nobody about how irritated he was feeling and when asked why he was going cold by a member, he explained what happened with regards to the statute. The person who had asked, despite being a member of the Banda San Pietru, didn't know about that event and offered his place on the committee to Alexander Caruana, who declined because he was no longer interested in a role on the committee.

THE 5TH OF DECEMBER 1989 - A MEETING ON THE BUS

It was on the 5th of December 1989, when on the way to work on the bus that Angelo Cutajar met Alexander Caruana who was on the way to school because at the time he was an apprentice at the Shipyard and a student at the Kordin Technical Institute. Angelo Cutajar

asked Alexander if he knew what happened the day before, with Caruana thinking that he was being asked about the tragedy at the Shipyard. Cutajar explained that he was referring to the dismissal of Anthony Camilleri from a member of the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru. At that point, Caruana once again expressed the desire for a new band club and from his end, Angelo Cutajar expressed immense agreement. Cutajar went with his brother Raymond to talk to Anthony Camilleri who had asked them to go to his shop in Sant' Andrija Street to talk to them that same day at about 7:00 pm. The first persons who formulated the concept of the establishment of a new band club were Anthony Camilleri, the brothers Angelo and Raymond Cutajar, the brothers Alexander and Joseph Caruana, Jason Vella and Michael Muscat, with the latter not expressing a wish to be part of the Provisory Committee. Anthony Camilleri had warned these first members that every beginning is a steep walk and that a lot of sacrifices would need to be made.

THE 14TH OF DECEMBER 1989 – THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE

From the 5th of December, the first members who were to be remembered as the founders of the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru Banda Birżebbuga started working on finding members for the new band club. Home computers were a rarity at the time and hence the first poster was made by Jason Vella using a stencil with the words "A new band club is going to be established in Birżebbuga – more details to come". By the following Sunday, more than 100 new members had joined the band club. Mr Camilleri wanted Alexander Caruana to be the first Secretary and Jason Vella to be the first Treasurer of the band club. Despite them being relatively young, he had promised them his help. On the 14th of December, the Provisional Committee held its first meeting at 46, "Antmary Flats", Flat 2, St Joseph Street, Birżebbuga. The property was owned by Anthony Camilleri. Amongst other things, a commission was established to start preparing a statute. In the meantime, the Provisional Committee started working on a name and insignia and upon the suggestion of Grazio Pullicino, Michael Bugelli from Żabbar who was the Assistant Musical Director for the Għaɑda Mużikali San Mikiel was approached to be the band club's first Musical Director. It was also decided to inform the journals about the establishment of a new band club in Birżebbuġa. This was to serve as a notice to the readers about this development. The notice was published in the Sunday journals on the 24th of December 1989. The committee for the Banda San Pietru published a letter in response to this notice in the Sunday journals on the 31st of December 1989. This letter indicated that the Banda San Pietru was ready to take action against those working to establish a new band club.

On the 31st of December, band musicians from the Banda San Pietru, including Alexander Caruana had to play in Qormi in a reciprocal service with the locality's Banda Anici since both band clubs had the same Musical Director, Mro. Frank Galea. Caruana had still not informed anyone from the Banda San Pietru that he was going to cease providing his services to the band club. A bit before boarding the van to get to Qormi some youths, including Alex Azzopardi informed Alexander Caruana about what had been published. Upon returning to Birżebbuġa, Caruana returned the peaked hat he had been lent because he told them

he would be making one himself. Nenu Busuttil and the Musical Director Mro. Frank Galea seemingly knew what was happening in Birżebbuġa, and so they asked Alexander if the march on Thursday was going to be held again. Caruana did not commit to this, and he was asked to inform them if it was going to be held so that they could inform the band musicians. From the band club, Caruana went to the Catholic Action where he saw the published letter. The supporters of the new band club convinced with what they were doing, went to the main square, with the cars passing by them and expressed the sentiment that they had no difficulty nor fear of facing justice because they were doing nothing wrong. Because of this manoeuvre, law enforcement was sent to the homes of these youths to intimidate them after a report was filed by the committee of the Banda San Pietru but the Provisional Committee did not give up and proceeded with its plans. Despite the allegations, the reasons for the establishment of the new band club are as explained in this chapter; the lack of effort from the Banda San Pietru towards the titular feast and how the feast and firework enthusiasts were treated from the former band club.

DISCUSSIONS IN THE PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE

It's also important that one goes over some discussions which were going on in the Provisional Committee during these times. The first discussion was on the name which was to be given to the band club. Amongst the proposed names there were Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, Għaqda Mużikali Birżebbuġa and Għaqda Mużikali 22 ta' Frar. Other discussions were on the colour which the new band club was to make its own. One of the suggestions was turquoise, being the locality's colour, and since the name of the band club was going to include Birżebbuġa there was an agreement that it was a good idea. However, there were reservations regarding the colour's political association and hence yellow was chosen instead, being the colour of the Papacy and hence having a direct reference to Saint Peter Apostle, the first leader of the Church. Jason Vella, Joseph Caruana and Alexander Caruana presented a design for the official insignia, with the chosen design being that made by Alexander Caruana. The badge included two lions and because of this, Taddeo Aguis had suggested the nickname *Tal-Iljun*.

SUNDAY 14TH OF JANUARY 1990 – THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA

After a night of thunderstorms and a morning of rain, the first General Meeting was held at the Lido Hall in Saint Edward Street. Joe Schembri, known as *tat-Talkies*, was ready to lend this hall to the Provisional Committee for it to be used for the official establishment of what today we know as the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru Banda Birżebbuġa A.D. 1990. An audience of numerous people who loved Birżebbuġa and its feast attended this historical meeting and met the news that Birżebbuġa had its own band club with acclamation and huge applause. This was the first meeting and the destiny was written... tal-Iljun, Banda Birżebbuġa, the yellow and green, everything which connects the people of Birżebbuġa after a single band club, for the benefit of the locality and the feast for Saint Peter Apostle.¹

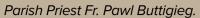
¹ This chapter was written after an interview with one of founders of the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, Alexander Caruana. Reference was also made to the article Xi Episodji Interessanti li Ġraw f'Birżebbuġa u li Kkontibwew Biex Titwaqqaf is-Socjetà Tagħna 25 Sena Ilu (Minn Qalb I-Iljuni - 2015);

One of the processions with the statue of StPeter.



The procession with the statue of Our Lady of Sorrows in 1988, starting from the old parish church.







The Consecration of the Bells on the 19th of July 1969.





Another photo of Pretty Bay when it was quite different from today.



The facade of the Parish Church with the years 1913 and 1988 to commemorate the 75th Anniversary as a Parish.



The promenade at Pretty Bay decorated in December 1989 when a summit between Bush and Gorbachev was held aboard a rolling ship just off the coast of Birżebbuġa, a summit that declared an end to the Cold War. At the same time, there were the first talks to have a second band club, Banda Birżebbuġa.

Part of the reply sent by the Committee of the Banda San Pietru as appeared on the local newspapers.

Banda ġdida

Sur Editur,

B'referenza ghall-avviż li deher fil-gazzetta tieghek bid-data tal-Hadd, 24 ta' Dicembru, 1989, dwar twaqqif ta' banda gdida l'Birżebbuga, il-Kumitat ta' l-Ghaqda Mużikali San Pietru, Birżebbuga jixtieq jistaqsi jekk nemmx skop ta' banda ohra, metal-Banda San Pietru dejjem tat il-konribut taghha fil-festa tal-Patrun aghha, kif ukoll f'diversi



qlajjiet foloz li qed jigu ivvintati fuq 1-Ghaqda Mužikali San Pietru. Il-Kumitat jiddikjara li fil-kažin

News about the foundation of a new band club in local journals.



Dettalji aktar tard

SE TITWAQQAF
BANDA GDIDA
F'BIRZEBBUGA
DETTALJI
AKTAR TARD

SE TITWAQQAF BANDA GDIDA F'BIRZEBBUGA DETTALJI AKTAR TARD The letter sent by the Secretary of the Banda San Pietru, Martin Zammit that appeared on the newspaper 'Il-Mument' on Sunday the 14th of January 1990.

Ghala banda ohra f'Birżebbuġa?

Sur Editur,

B"riferenza ghal avviži li dehru fil-gazzetta tieghek dwar twaqqif ta' banda gdida f'Biržebbuga, il-Kumitat tal-Ghaqda Mužikali San Pietru jixtieq jistaqsi jekk hemmx skop ta' banda ohra, meta l-Banda San Pietru dejjem tat il-kontribut taghha fil-festa tal-Padrun taghna, kif ukoll f'diversi okkažjonijiet ohra.

Il-Kumitat jixtieq jigbed lattenzjoni tal-qarrejja tieghek li dan kollu gej minn diversi persuni li ma ridux joqoghdu ghad-dixxiplina kif inhi stipulata fl-istatut tal-Ghaqda. Il-Kumitat jixtieq jaghmilha cara li wara li kien hemm persuna li iffalsifikat firem ta' nies, dawn kienu prezentati lill-Kumitat bhala membri godda.

Fatt ieħor li l-Kumitat jixtieq isemmi hu dwar il-qlajjiet foloz li qed ikunu ivvintati dwar l-Ghaqda Muzikali tagħna.

Il-Kumitat jiddikjara li fil-kazin

tal-Għaqda, il-politika dejjem thalliet barra. Il-fatti juru li l-Għaqda tgawdi l-appoġġ minn kull ideal politiku. Dan il-fatt wieħed seta' jarah fil-ġranet tal-festa meta lill-Għaqda tagħna irċeviet stedina għal bibita miż-żewġ każini politici.

Fl-aħħarnett, il-Kumitat jixtieq jiddikjara li jekk il-gideb li qed jintqal jibqa' sejjer, l-Għaqda lesta tieħu passi legali ħalli thares linteressi tagħha.

MARTIN ZAMMIT Segretarju Birzebbuga

The letter Provisional Secretary Alexander Caruana sent to the Editor of a local newspaper.

Sur Editur,

B'riferenza ghall-ittra li dehret fil-gurnal tieghek bid-data tal-Hadd 31 ta'Dicembru,1989,bit-titlu"Banda Gdida f' Birzebbuga"ffirmata mis-Segretarju ta' 1-Ghaqda Muzikali San Pietru, nixtien ninfurmak li r-risposta naghtuwha aktar il-guddiem.

> Alexander Caruana Segretarju Provizorju

A request made by the Provisional Committee to the Parish Priest Fr Pawl Buttigieg so that the General Meeting of the 14th of January is held in the Parish Hall.

Dar Parrokjali, Triq ^Kurat **F**enech, Birzebbuga. GHAQDA MUZIKALI, BIRZEBBUGA. care off:14 St. Philip Str. Birzebbuga. 15/12/89.

Sur Kappillan,

Kif nahseb illi ga smajt f'Birzebbuga qed tigi mwaqqfa ghaqda muzikali gdida, u nista'nghidlek ukoll li ser tibda tissejjah:"GHAQDA MUZIKALI BIRZEBBUG A".

Din il-gimgha ghamilna l-ewwel laqgha tal-kumitat ovizorju u tkellimma dwar il-laqgha generali ta'l-ghaqda. Id-data ta' in il-laqgha sejra tkun il-Hadd 14 ta'Jannar 1990 bejn id-disa'u nofs ta'filghodu u nofsinhar. Barra minhekk il-kumitat wera x-xewqa, dejjem lekk ikun possibli li din issir fis-Sala Parrokkjali.

Nitolbok twegibna mill-aktar fis jekk huwiex ossibli li din il-laqgha issir fis-Sala Parrokjali jew le,peress li ssa dahal iz-zmien u ahna rridu nibghatu c-cirkolari lill-membri malajr bemm jista'jkun.

FSisem 1-ghaqda taghna nirringrazzjak bil-quddiem,

Inselli ghalik, Dejjem tieghek,

Alex Caruana. Segretarju ₱rovizorju. The letter sent by Parish Priest Fr. Pawl Buttigieg giving reasons why the meeting couldn't be held in the Parish Hall.

PARROCCA SAN PIETRU

Tel: 871200

DOMUS CURIALIS, CURATE FENECH STREET, BIRZEBBUĞA

RECEIVED 2 3 DEC 1989

Date: 20 tat dicembru 1989

Alex Caruana
Segretarju Provizorju
Ghaqda Muzikali Birzebbuga
c/o 14, Triq S Filippu
B¹Buga

Ghaziz Alex,

Nirringrazzjak li nfurmajtni bit-twaqqif ta† l-Ghaqda Muzikali Birzebbuga.

Rigward it-talba taghkom ghal- Laqgha Generali, ghandi ninfurmakom li mill-Hadd,14 ta¹ Jannar,ser jibda l-kors ta¹ Kana ghall-gharajjes fis-sala parrokkjali li jsir kull sena f¹dan iz-zmien. Barra minn hekk hija policy taghna li s-Sala Parrokkjali ma tigix mislufa ghal attivitajiet bhal dawn minn ghaqdiet simili.

Jiddispjacini li din l-ewwel talba ma setghetx tigi milqugha.

Taghkom fi Kristu.

New Voul

kappillan

P.S.

Nawgura lilek u nitolbok twassal ukoll lil shabek xewqat ta' ferh, ghaqda u sliem f'dan iz-zmien tal-Milied u tul is-Sena l-Gdida.

An announcement by the newspaper 'Il-Mument' on the 7th of January 1990 inviting those interested to attend the first General Meeting.

AVVIZ

Se ssir laqgha fil-Lido Hall, Birżebbuġa fl-14 ta' Jannar 1990 fid-9.30 a.m. biex tiġi iffurmata l-Banda l-ġdida.

Min hu interessat ma ghandux jongos.

An announcement by the newspaper 'It-Torca' on the 7th of January 1990 inviting those interested to attend the first General Meeting.

Ser issir laqgha fil-Lido Hall, B'Buġa fl-14 ta' Jannar, 1990, fid-9.30 a.m. biex tiġi iffurmata il-banda l-ġdida. Min hu interessat ma għandux jongos. One of the correspondences that appeared in local newspapers between the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990.

Jonioq Du Puis I dawn I-an- | Check book) linghala lala

Banda ġdida f'Birżebbuġa

Sur Editur,

Birżebbuga.

Rigward it-twaqqif ta' banda gdida f'Birzebbuga, nixtieq naghti xi dettalji dwar x'hemm warajha.

In-nies li qeghdin wara din il-banda gdida u li huma whud minnhom maghrufin, jistghu jigu kklassifikati hekk:-

- a) dawn imkeċċijin mill-Kumitat tal-Festa minħabba intransiġenzi u nuqqas ta' dixxiplina;
- b) dawk imkeċċijin millkażin tal-banda eżistenti minħabba attentat fuq issede ta' l-istess Soċjetà;
- c) dawk li ilhom jippruvaw bla success jinvolvu lill-banda ezistenti fil-hdim illegali ta' loghob tan-nar;
- d) dawk li tkeccew millbanda ezistenti wara ammissjoni bil-miktub dwar firem fuq dokumenti tal-istess soc-

jetà;

- 2) dawk li xtaqu jkunu bandisti mal-banda ezistenti izda qatt ma setghu jilhqu xi kwalità ta' livell; u
- f) dawk li jmorru ma' kull rih gdid.

Nispera li f'Birżebbuga ftit hemm minn dawn ta' l-ah-har, u naf li d-dettalji li ma tajtx jien, ghalkemm nafhom sew, sejrin ikunu mxandrin ma jdumux fil-Laqgha Generali li jmiss ta' l-Ghaqda Muzikali San Pietru.

Fil-fatt, digà gew imxandrin xi ftit dettalji fuq in-Notice Board ta' l-istess għaqda.

TAL-LAHAM.-

The letter sent to the members, inviting them to attend the first General Meeting held on the 14th of January 1990, during which the Għaqda Mużikali Birżebbuġa was established.

GHAQDA MUZIKALI BIRZEBBUGA A.D.1990(Provizorja)

c/o 14,St.Philip Street, Birzebbuga.

Cirkolari Numru 1/89

28/12/89

Inti taf bl-inizzjattiva li ttiehdet

sabiex tigi mwaqqfa ghaqda muzikali gdida f'Birzebbuga. Taf ukoll

bl-entuzjazmu u l-hegga kbira li hawn bhal-issa f'Birzebbuga biex

tfittex titwaqqaf din l-ghaqda. Ghalhekk int mitlub/a li tattendi

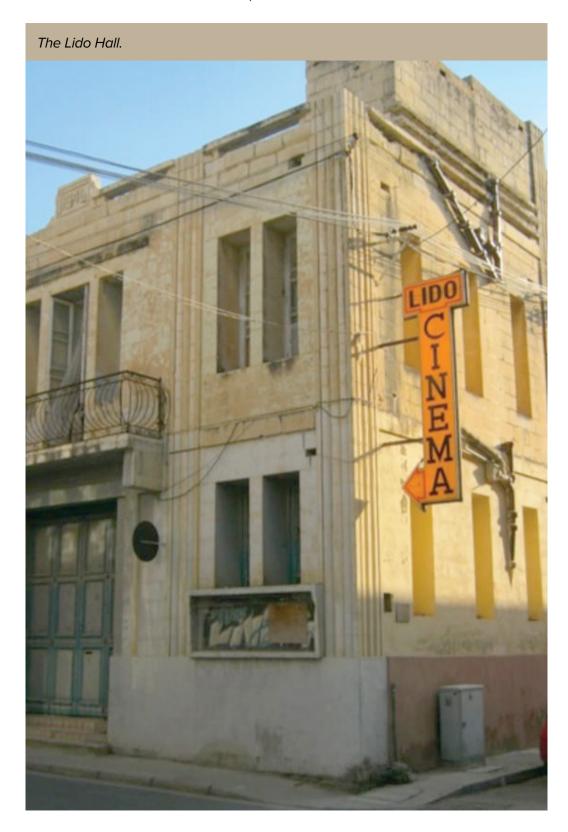
bi hgarek ghall-ewwel laqgha li sejra ssir nhar il-Hadd 14 ta'

Jannar, 1990 fid-9.30 a.m. fil-Lido Hall, Triq San Edwardu, B'Buga.

AGENDA: 1) Diskors mill-President Provizorju.

- 2) Diskors Amministrattiv mis-Segretarju Provizorju
- 3) Diskors Finanzjarju mill-Kaxxier Provizorju.
- 4) Hatra tal-Kumitat
- 5) Approvazzjoni ta l-istatut ta l-Ghaqda.
- 6)Approvazzjoni tas-Surmast Direttur ta*1-Ghaqda.

Alexander Caruana Segretarju Provizorju.



An appreciative letter to artist Ġużeppi Darmanin for designing the Coat of Arms of the Band Club, following the ideas of Alexander Caruana.

77, Pretty Bay, Birzebbuga.

GHAQDA MUZIKALI
BIRZEBBUGA.
c/o 14,Triq San Filippu
Birzebbuga.
13/1/1990.

Ghaziz Sur G. Darmanin.

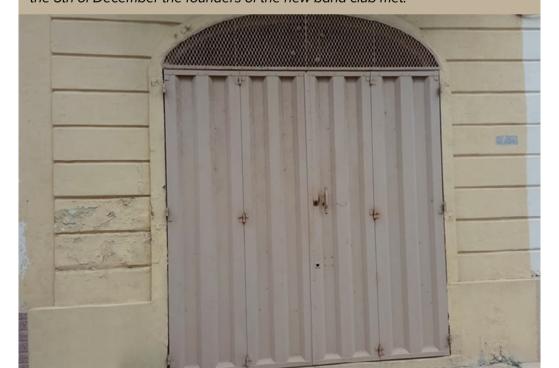
Qieghed niktiblek din l-ittra qasira f'isem il-kumitat Provizorju ta'l-GHAQDA MUZIKALI BIRZEBBUGA biex nirringrazzjak hafna talli inti ghogbok gentilment tiddisinjalna l-arma ta'l-ghaqda u tal-pacenzja kbira li hadt biex ghamiltilna dak li xtaqna. Nixtieq ngharfek ukoll li l-kumitat kollu ghogbitu u hekk ukoll nista'naccertak li se toghgob il-membri li nhar il-Hadd li gej se jarawha fil-laqgha generali.

Filwaqt li nibghat nselli ghalik, nixtieqlek kull gid u kull success ghall-futur,

Dejjem tieghek,

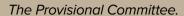
Alex Caruana, Segretarju Provizorju.

The garage, that was a butcher's shop property of Anthony Camilleri, where on the 5th of December the founders of the new band club met.



'Anthmary', St Joseph Road, Birżebbuġa. In this house, property of Family Camilleri, the first meetings were held in 1989 and 1990.







The first Central Committee led by President Anthony Camilleri, as elected on the 14th of January 1990.



The List of the First Provisional Committee and Musical Director Michael Bugelli.

- 1. AXIAQ EMMANUEL: 'Holly's Flats', Noqra Street, B'Buga.

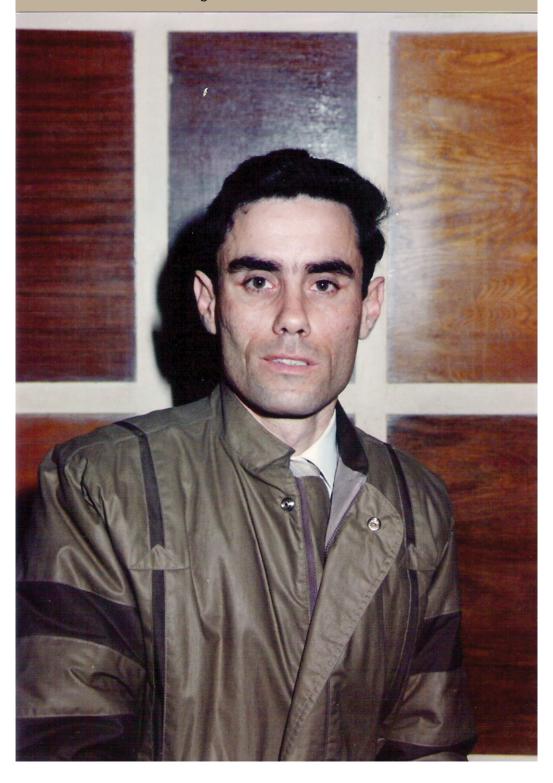
 Tel: /
- 2. ABDILLA RAYMOND: 18.St. Andrew Street, B'Buga. Tel: 828507 Hanut: 681919
- 3. CAMILLERI ANTHONY: 35, St. Andrew Street, B'BUga. Tel: 828508 Hanut: 828509
- 4.5. CARUANA ALEXANDER/JOSEPH:14,St.Philip Street,B'Buga.
 Tel:682931
- 6,7, CUTAJAR ANGELO/RAYMOND: 22, St. Vincent Street, B'Buga.
 Tel: 682501
- 8. FARRUGIA JOSEF:17,St.Andrew Street,B'Buga.
 Tel:681501
- 9. GABARETTA PATRICK: Bernardette', Triq 31 ta'Marzu, B'Buga.
 Tel: 682915
- 10. MANGION EMMANUEL: 'Country Lodge', Tal-Papa Road, B'Buga.
 Tel: 829256
- 11.VELLA JASON: 'Gawhra', Zurrieg Road, B'Buga.'
 Tel: 682732
- 12.PACE JOSEPH:Flat 12,Block B,Government Housin Estate,B'Buga.
 Tel:681252
- 13. PULLICINO GRAZIO: 4"St. Michael", Triq San Guzepp, B'Buga.
 Tel: 682640

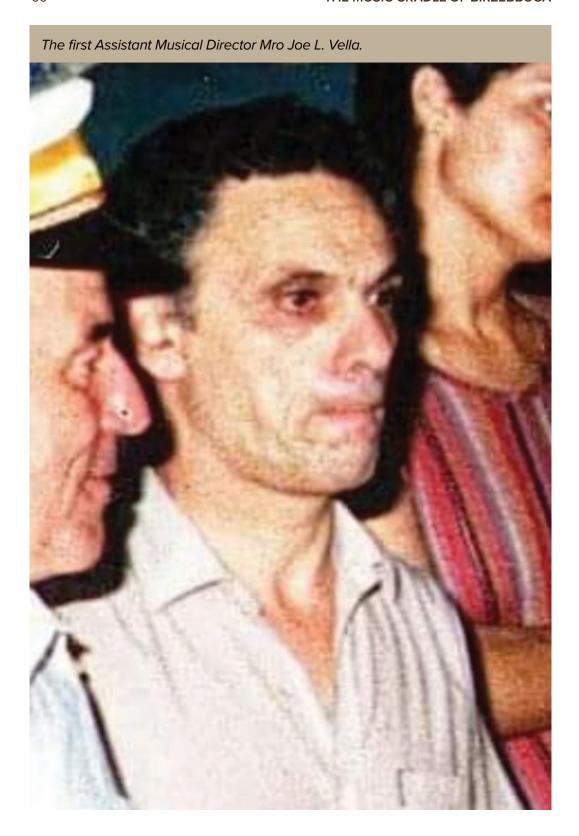
Mro MICHAEL BUGELLI: "Sacred Heart",
Tel: 786455

Zabbar.



Musical Director Michael Bugelli in 1990.





A letter to Grazio Pullicino from the Central Committee inviting him to join the committee.

"St.Michael" Tria San Guzepp, Birzebbuga. GHAQDA MUZIKALI
BIRZEBBUGA.
c/o 14.St.Philip Str.
Birzebbuga.
1/1/1990.

Ghaziz Sur G. Puliccino,

Qieghed niktiblek din l-ittra qasira f'isem il-kumitat Provizorju ta'l-ghaqda muzikali l-gdida li kif nahseb ga smajt ser tibda'tissejjah GHAQDA MUZIKALI BIRZEBBUGA.

Qeghdin nibghatulek din l-ittra biex jekk inti trid tidhol membru fil-kumitat Provizorju. Ahna nafu kemm inti bniedem idejali ghal dan il-kumitat, minhabba li inti kont bandist, kont ukoll membru f'kumitati ohra tal-baned u bniedem li dejjem kont u ghadek interessat hafna fil-banda. Barra minhekk ahna nafu bix-xewqa kbira tieghek li tidhol membru f'dan il-kumitat.

Ghalhekk int mitlub tattendi ghall-lad - gha tal-kumitat li jmiss,nhar il-Hamis 4 ta'Jannar 1990,f'AntMary Flats,Flat 2,Triq San Guzepp Birzebbuga,fis-7.30 p.m.

Nibghat nselli ghalik hafna,

Dejjem tieghek,

Alex Caruana

Segretarju Provizorju

N.B.F'isem il-kumitat nitolbok biex izzomm kollox mistur l-aktar dwar il-post fejn qed isiru l-laqghat.Grazzi.

An invitation to J. Farrugia to be elected Honorary President. Letter sent on the 18th of December 1989 by the Provisional Committee.

"Maria Dolorosa" Triq Sant'Anglu, Birzebbuga. GHAQDA MUZIKALI
BIRZEBBUGA.
Care off:14,Triq San Filippu.
Birzebbuga.
18/12/89.

Ghaziz Sur J. Farrugia,

F'Birzebbuga inti ga taf li dieghda titwaqqaf ghaqda Muzikali gdida li ser tibda tissejjah GHAQDA MUZIKALI BIRZEBBUGA. Din l-ghaqda minn isimha stess turi li fiha ser tinkorpora d-dilettanti kollha tal-festa ta'Birzebbuga u taghti bidu biex f'Birzebbuga tibda' ssir festa bhal ta'rhula ohra.

Fl-ewwel laqgha tal-kumitat Provizorju li ghadu kemm kellna l-gimgha l-ohra, il-kumitat kollu wera'x-xewqa li lilek dejjem jekk inti trid u jekk tigi approvat mill-laqgha generali, jahtrek President Onorarju taôl-ghaqda taghna. Dan il-kumitat qed jaghmlu wara li sar jaf li inti kont minn ta'l-ewwel nett li dhalt membru u nafu li qieghed tinteressa ruhek sew biex l-ghaqda taghna tfittex tikber. Dan ikun ta'unur kbir ghalik li tkun President Onorarju ta'ghaqda li ghadha qed titwieled. Barra minhekk int tkun tista'tibbenifika mill-beneficcji kollha li jappartjenu"Presidenti Onorarji" skond l-istatut ta'l-ghaqda. Dwar dan inkunu nistghu naghtuk aktar dettalji 'l quddiem meta l-istatut ikun lest kollu u jkun approvat mill-membri kollha ta'l-ghaqda taghna fl-ewwel laqgha generali.

Ghalhekk int mitlub tinfurmana bil-miktub malajr kemm jista'jkun jekk taccettax din il-kariga gholja jew le biex jekk taccetta'nkunu nistghu nipproponuk lill-membri biex dawn japprovawk. Nixtieq naghrfek li l-laqgha generali sejra ssir nhar il-Hadd 14 ta' Jannar, 1990.

F8isem il-mitejn membru li ghandna sal-lum fl-ghaqda taghna nselli ghalik hafna u nawgura lilek u lill-familja tieghek il-Milied u s-Sena t-Tajba.

Dejjem tieghek,

Segretarju Provizorju.

An invitation sent to Mr. J. Schembri to be elected Honorary President.

Flat 3, Schembri Flats, Tria San Edwardu, Birzebbuga. GHAQDA MUZIKALI
BIRZEBBUGA.
c/o 14 Triq San Filippu,
Birzebbuga.
1/1/1990.

Ghaziz Sur J.Schembri.

F'Birzebbuga,kif inti ga taf qieghda titwaqqaf ghaqda muzikali gdida li ser tibda'tissejjah GHAQDA MUZIKALI BIRZEBBUGA.Din l-ghaqda barra li se jkollha l-banda taghha,se tghin kemm tista'biex il-festa ta'Birzebbuga tkompli tikber.

Fl-ahhar laqqha tal-Kumitat Provizorju li kellna fi tmiem il-gimgha l-ohra,il-kumitat kollu wera'x-xewqa li lilek,dejjem jekk inti trid u jekk tigi approvat mill-laqqha Generali jahtrek President Onorarju ta'l-Ghaqda taghna. Dan ikun ta'unur kbir ghalik li tkun President Onorarju ta'ghaqda li ghadha qed titwieled. Barra minhekk int tkun tista'tibbenifika mill-beneficcji kollha li jappartjenu Presidenti Onorarji skond l-istatut ta'l-GHaqda. Dwar dan inkunu nistghu naghtuk aktar dettalji 'l quddiem meta l-istatut ikun lest kollu u jkun approvat mill-membri kollha ta'l-ghaqda flewwel laqqha Generali.

Ghalhekk int mitlub tinfurmana bil-miktub malajr kemm jista'jkun jekk taccettax din il-kariga gholja jew le, biex jekk taccetta'nkunu nistghu nipproponuk lill-membri fl-ewwel largha Generali biex dawn japprovawk. Nixtiec infakkrek li l-ewwel laggha Generali sejra tikun nhar il-Hadd 14 ta'Jannar 1990.

F'isem 'l fua minn mitejn membru li ga ghandna msehbin fl-ghaada taghna nsell i ghalik hafna u nirringrazzjak tal-koperazzjoni kbira li ga sibna minghandek.

Dejjem tieghek;
Alex Caruana

Segretarju Provizorju.

An invitation sent to Joseph Pace to be part of the Provisional Committee.

Flat 2,Block B, Gov.Housing Estate, Birzebbuga. GHAQDA MUZIKALI
BIRZEBBUGA.
c/o 14.Triq San Filippu,
Birzebbuga.
1/1/1990.

Ghaziz Sur J. Pace.

Qieghed niktiblek din l-ittra qasira f'isem il-kumitat Provizorju ta'l-ghaqda muzikali l-gdida li kif nahseb ga smajt ser tibda'tissejjah GHAQDA MUZIKALI BIRZEBBUGA.

Qeghdin nibghatulek din l-ittra biex jekk inti trid, tidhol membru fil-kumitat Provizorju. Ahna nafu kemm inti zaghzugh attiv f'dak kollu li jirrigwardja l-festa.u nafu wkoll kemm inti habrieki u ghalhekk inti idejali ghall-dan il-kumitat. Inti taf li ahna kumitat li fil-maggoranza tieghu huwa ffurmat minn zghazagh ughalhekk nista naccertak bil-quddiem li ma ghandek issib l-ebda diffikulta biex tkun tista tissieheb maghra. Barra minhekk ahna nafu bix-xewqa kbira tieghek li tidhol membru f'dan il-kumitat.

Ghalhekk int mitlub tattendi ghall-laqgha tal-kumitat li jmiss,nhar il-Hamis 4 ta'Jannar 1990,F'AnthMary Flats,Flat 2,Triq San Guzepp,Birzebbuga,fis-7.30 p.m.

Nibghat nselli ghalik hafna,

Dejjem tieghek,

Alex Caruana

Segretarju Provizorju.

N.B.F'isem il-kumitat nitolbok biex izzomm kollok mistur l-aktar dwar il-post fejn qed isiru l-lagghat.Grazzi

Ronnie Balzan's reply.



Għaqda Mużikali B'Buģia
K\O, 14, Triq San Filippu
B'Buģia.

168, B'Buģia rd, B'Buģia.

Jannar 1990

Għażiż Segretarju,

Hassejtni onorat bl-ghażla li intom ghamiltu biex inkun President Onorarju ta' din il-Banda Ġdida, li naf li ser tkun suċċess.

Jien kieku xtaqt hafna li naċċetta din il-kariga tant prestiģjuża li intom ģentilment offrejtuli iżda minhabba impenji ohra ma nistax naċċetta. Kieku naċċetta, jien kont ikun qed nonqos kemm lejn il-kumitat kif ukoll lejn il-membri. Billi din il-kariga ġġib maghha responsabbiltà u mpenn nhoss li ma ghandix il-mezzi u l-hin mehtieġ biex nokkupaha.

Jiena, iżda nitlobkom biex fejn taħsbu li nista' nkun ta' għajnuna biex tavviċinawni minnufih u jien nassigurakhom li nagħmel mill-aħjar li nista' biex nagdikom.

Nerģa' nirringrazzjakom u nixtiqilkom kull success ghall-futur.

Dejjem Taghkom

Ronnie Balzan

A letter sent by a member.

LIS- SE SAR TAMES ROVISTRESO

MR A CANUANA GHADDA BUZIUMI BBOSCA, 10 14 TRIO SAN FILIPPU

B. B 0 9 cm

HIRETTY BAY B'B094 11ta'SANNAR1990

Sur lamone,

Maxing niningrossion to be the li bytatle f'usem il- Wunner har 13 rign tel- GHADAN MUZIKACI BBUSIA. WARTLINAW GURALHOM KULL

Success a nwested hom Exagina Trefter ma whos ligien with when atter biggings

his while blonger til humitet jerteg

That danha the Swigs Hope a surgery grantil shatch hollow given -

Ged nghadolile korta ta Hones Line

her often kom xi fat will-Ispejes a grandhum, Sotten Man Piles

8 Jan P. yes

The first Coat of Arms designed by Alexander Caruana as found on the first page of the first statute of the Society.

-- LULGLUI IA D-UHRUDA MUSIKALII DIRUGABBUUA:

APITLU 1:L-Isem, 1-Arma, il-Kuluri u 1-Indirizz:

- 1) L-ISEM: L-isem ta'l-Gharda huwa "GHAQDA MUZIKALI BIRZEBBUGA A.D.1990" is-sena meta twaqofet 1-Ghaqda.
- 2) L-ARMA: L-arma ta'l-Ghaqda tikkonsisti fl-arpa tal-Muzika.F'nofs l-arpa hemm skud b'kuruna fugu u f'nofs l-iskud hemm l-arma ta'Birzebbuga. Isfel ta'l-Arpa hemm skroll li fugu hemm miktub"Ghaqda Muzikali Birzebbuga A.D.1990'. Fuq l-iskroll hemm zewg iljuni, wiehed fuq il-lemin u l-iehor fuq ix-Xellug ta'l-Arpa li b'idejhom qed izommu l-Arpa, Kollox kif riprodott hawn taht:



- 3) IL-KULURI: Il-kulur Principali ta'l-Ghaqda huwa l-Isfar. Il-kulur Sekond ta'l-Ghaqda huwa 1-Ahdar.
- 4)L-INDIRIZZ: 77, Tria Birzebbuga, Birzebbuga.

KAPITLU 2: L-Ghanijiet ta'l-Ghanda:

5) i) Taghlim tal-Muzika ii) Rikreazzjoni tal-membri

iii)Tiehu sehem f'kull festa socjali u religjuza li ssir f'Birzebbuga, l-iktar fil-festa titulari. Dan dejjem jekk ikun possibli izda qatt me tista'tiehu sehem f'festi konnessi ma'Politika. iv) Jekk ikun possibli toffri ghajnuna Filantropika.

KAPITLU 3: Shubija ma'l-Ghaqda:

- 6) L-Ghadda hija ffurmata minn:
 - i) Il-Kumitat
 - ii)Membri Regolari
 - iii) Membri Minuri
 - iv)Bandisti ta'l-Ghaqda
 - v)Allievi ta'l-Ghanda
 - vi)Presidenti Onorarji
 - vii) Membri Onorarji
 - viii)Surmast Direttur u Assistent Surmast jew Surmastrijiet.
 - ix) Direttur Spiritwali
- 7) Membri Regolari: Biex wiehed ikun jkun membru Regolari jrid ikun ghalac il-hmistax il-sena, ikollu kondotta tajba, irid jipprop-onieh membru tal-Kumitat u jissekondah membru iehor ta kumitat.Kull membru regolari ghandu jhallas lira Maltija fis-sena bhala menswalita'.Is-Sena tal-Menswalita'tibda'fl-l ta'Jannar u tispicca fil-31 ta'Dicembru ta'l-istess Sena Membru Regolari ghandu d-dritt ghall-

Part of the first members' liSt

SOCJETA FILARMONIKA BIRZEBBUGA A.D. 1990.

ARTHONY CAMILIERI
JASON YELIA
ANGEL CUTAJAR
ANGEL CUTAJAR
ANGEL CUTAJAR
ANGEL CUTAJAR
ANGEL CUTAJAR
ANGEL CUTAJAR
ANGEL CHARLANA
ALICA SALIBA
ATO OL SOSPH PAGE
ALICANELLERI
JOS.PH CARILANA
ATIC SALIBA
TO. JOSEPH AGE

A request by the Provisional Committee sent to Parish Priest Fr. Pawl Buttigieg so that the Society could have a Spiritual Director.

Il-Kappillan, Parrocca San Pietru, Birzebbuga. GHAQDA MUZIKALI
BIRZEBBUGA.
c/o 14 Triq San Filippu,
Birzebbuga.
31/12/1989.

Ghaziz Kappillan,

Kif ga taf,grupp ta'nies minn Birzebbuga,l-aktar zghazagh,behsibna nwaqqfu Banda gdida.Nixtiequ li kieku,bhal kull banda ohra f'Malta,jkollna Direttur Spiritwali mill-Parrocca.Xtaqna li nitolbu lilek li tinnomina Sacerdot mill-Parrocca biex ikun id-Direttur Spiritwali taghna.

Biex inkunu sincieri mieghek ga konna avvicinajna lil Dun Alfred u lil Dun Charles. Ma'Dun Charles il-bierah stoarrejna li kien missna ktibna lilek biex tinnomina lid-Direttur Spiritwali. Dun Charles calilna li tkun haga sabiha kieku naghmlu dan u ghadna fil-hin li naghmluh. U dan ced naghmluh issa permezz ta'din l-ittra.

Nitolbuk tiskuzana u taghdirna jekk inqasnik. Ahna nixtiequ li d-Direttur Spiritwali jkun jista' jithabbar fil-Laqgha Generali li se issir fil-Lido Hall nhar il-Hadd 14 ta'Jannar 1990.

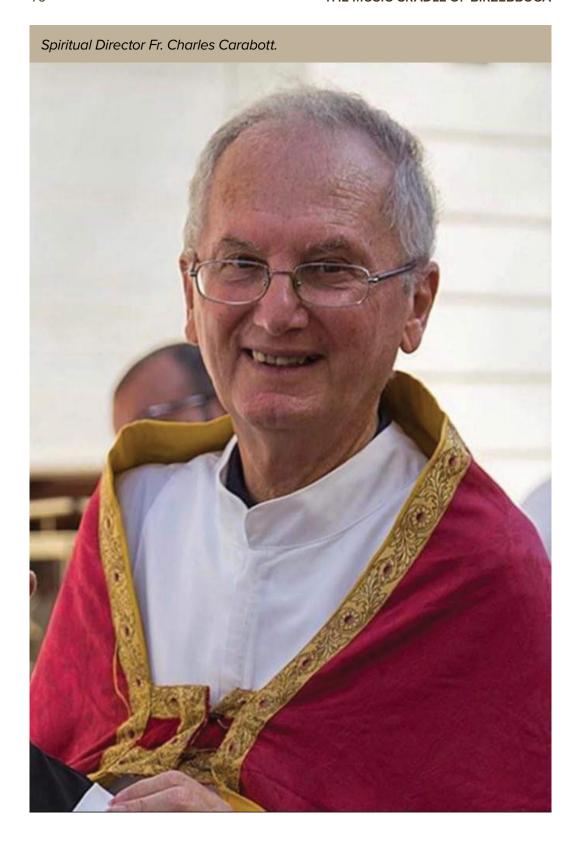
Niehdu din l-okkazzjoni biex nawgura lilek u lil Kleru kollu s-Sena t-Tajba.Nitolbuk tberikna.

Dejjem tieghek,

Parmana

Alex Caruana

Segretarju Provizorju





THE FIRST STEPS

fter the strong acclamation from the Birżebbuġa locals who enthusiastically celebrated the establishment of the Għaqda Mużikali Birżebbuġa, it was the first committee's turn to start working. The disposition of the members from the start showed that there was a willingness to work because the first meeting was held just two days after the establishment of the band club, on Tuesday 16th of January 1990. In the absence of a building for the band club, the meeting was held at Anthony Camilleri's private property in St Joseph Street, where a few weeks prior the first steps which led to the 14th of January 1990 were made. The members of the first official committee were: Anthony Camilleri as President, Alexander Caruana as Secretary, Jason Vella as Treasurer, Emanuel Axiaq as Vice President, Patrick Gabaretta as Assistant Secretary, Raymond Abdilla as Assistant Treasurer, Angelo Cutajar as Director General, Raymond Cutajar as Assistant Director General, Joseph Caruana as Public Relations Officer, Grazio Pullicino as Archivist, as well as members Teddy Agius, Kevin Camilleri, Josef Farrugia, Joseph Pace and Emanuel Mangion.

THE BEGINNING

Unfortunately, the first official activity after the meeting during which the band club was officially established was to be one of grief. In fact, on the same day as the establishment of the band club, the Committee attended the funeral of Frenc Farrugia, *ta' Gażuba*, who had died on the eve of the band club's establishment, Saturday 13th January 1990.¹

Several other individuals felt that they had to offer their help so that the operation of the new band club could be further facilitated. The Parish Priest, Fr. Pawl Buttigieg accepted

the request to appoint a Spiritual Director for the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, but not before he was given a copy of the statute for evaluation. An agreement was reached that a delegation from the band club would go talk to the Parish Priest, provide him with a copy of the statute and also ask for a copy of the popular hymn to Saint Peter and inform him that the Banda Birżebbuġa was going to perform on Thursday 2nd of August, during the morning march on Sunday 5th of August as well as after the Sacramental Blessing after the procession. The delegation also asked him for a monetary contribution for the band club to participate on Saturday 1st of August ² something which had already been decided from the band club's end.³ The Parish Priest had already promised Lm600 to the Banda San Pietru and hence he informed that band club that he wasn't in a position to spend more money, however, this matter was to be discussed for the 1991 feaSt

The first official committee also had to face the requirements which arise when a new serious voluntary organization is established, and the committee for the Għaqda Mużikali Birżebbuġa wanted the operations of the band club to be serious and transparent. Hence a letter was sent to the Internal Tax Department, and to the Malta Band Club Association (*Għaqda Każini tal-Banda*) such that the society is incorporated into it.⁴ The reply from this organisation was received about a month after saying that for the request to materialise, there would be needed a statute, a formed Committee, a Musical Director and permits from the Police.⁵ The band club appointed Emanuel Mangion to represent it in this organisation.⁶

The Għaqda Mużikali Birżebbuġa, the Banda San Pietru decided to change its name. This led to the application for the permit for the establishment of the Għaqda Mużikali Birżebbuġa to meet a roadblock. The name of the former band became Għaqda Mużikali Birżebbuġa, Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen. The Police informed the committee for the Għaqda Mużikali Birżebbuġa that it was going to have to change its name. The Secretary Alexander Caruana asked the Sergeant if the name could be Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa. The Sergeant replied in the affirmative and an Extraordinary General Meeting was held at the Lido Hall in April 1990, with the members approving the new name and hence the process for the permission could proceed. On the 19th of June 1990, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was accepted as a Member of the Malta Band Clubs Association.⁷

Several membership cards were made for distribution to the members of the band club, whilst work on the sign with the band club's name for the premises' façade was initiated.⁸ As is evident from the band club's records, it wasn't only the heat of the moment which

- 2 ibid.
- 3 Minutes 1990, Meeting 4, 6 th February 1990
- 4 Minutes 1990, Meeting 1, 16 th January 1990
- 5 Minutes 1990, Meeting 7, 27 th February 1990
- 6 Minutes 1990, Meeting 14, 5 th June 1990
- 7 Minutes 1990, Meeting 15, 19 th June 1990
- 8 Minutes 1990, Meeting 12, 8 th May 1990

encouraged several individuals to become members of the Socjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, because as the years passed, more individuals continued to become members of this band club as they felt that it could be their cultural representative in Birżebbuġa.⁹

THE BAND

Once the band club, was established, needs related to its band had to be taken care of. Hence work was started on the first set of libretti decorated with the band club's insignia as well as work on the flag of honour (I-istandard), which was to have a green border with a yellow background. The flag of honour was sown by Lucy Gatt and painted by Guzeppi Darmanin.¹⁰ Along with these President Anthony Camilleri paid for the first set of instruments which was to consist of a bass drum, cymbals and a tambourine.11 The band club's official insignia was also painted on the bass drum by Ġużeppi Darmanin. 12 Several members started contacting the band club's officials to start learning music. Hence a delegation from the Committee, on the 24th of January 1990 met with Musical Director Mro. Michael Bugelli and Assistant Musical Director Joseph L. Vella so that 26 pupils start being taught music.13 To reach this goal, a meeting was held with the prospective pupils and their parents on the 11th of February 1990 and the music lessons started being delivered immediately.¹⁴ Since after the first year, the number of pupils increased, the band club's building was insufficient to accommodate all the pupils who were being taught music and hence it had to borrow a property from Gabriel and Jessie Ebejer such that lessons could be held there.¹⁵ Musical lessons weren't only being offered to incorporate the local musicians as members of the Banda Birżebbuga but also because the same musicians could possibly find a career in music which would know its beginning to the new band club. Hence the band club started sending the pupils to sit for examinations by foreign boards,16 something it has continuously done up to this day as the band club is registered with the London College of Music.

During the first meeting of the Central Committee, the concept of establishing a group entrusted with fireworks was also considered, such that the titular feast included a firework spectacle.¹⁷

THE PREMISES (IL-KAŻIN)

The Committee for the Socjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa wanted to acquire a place where the members could meet up and socialise, and where the operations of the band club

- 9 Minutes 1993, Meeting 3, 8 th February 1993
- 10 Minutes 1990, Meeting 2, 23 rd January 1990
- 11 Minutes 1990, Meeting 3, 31 st January 1990
- Minutes 1990, Meeting 4, 6 th February 1990
- 13 Minutes 1990, Meeting 3, 31 st January 1990
- 14 Minutes 1990, Meeting 4, 6 th February 1990
- 15 Minutes 1991, Meeting 3, 12 th February 1991
- 16 Minutes 1991, Meeting 7, 16 th April 1991
- 17 Minutes 1990, Meeting 3, 31 st January 1990

could be further expanded. On the 20th of January 1990, a delegation of the band club went to talk to Johnny Polidano who was renting out *The Morning Star Bar* found at door number 74, Birżebbuġa Street, Birżebbuġa. This property, although not large, was found in the square at St George's Bay and it had been closed for some time. The rent was to be Lm126 annually and the band club was also to pay an additional fee of Lm1500 at its leisure. The contract was signed on the 30th of January 1990. ¹⁹ For the permit to be issued and the rent to be transferred to the band club, two members of the Committee had to concede their place on the committee such that the committee became a thirteenperson team instead of fifteen. Kevin Camilleri and Teddy Agius conceded their place. Once the band club had its rent documents in hand, it could apply for the permit.

The property had various needs which needed dealing with for it to start operating properly, including electrical issues. The Architect Michael Schembri was entrusted to make the plans for the property which was to serve as the band club's premises. The contract was signed in front of the Lawyer Henry Antoncich with a delegation from the band club present as well as Josephine Ebejer on behalf of the owner. The agreement for the rent was for an annual fee of Lm150 which was to increase by 5% every 5 years. An agreement was also reached that Emanual Stivala was to have the right to take care of the band club's bar every year and that he was to pay for rent and utilities. He was also given the right to install a telephone line if he wanted to at his own expense.²⁰ A pool table was also brought to the headquarters for the members to play pool in a relaxing atmosphere and a clean environment.²¹

The first meeting of the band club's committee at the new headquarters was held two days after the meeting with the prospective musical pupils, on the 13th of February 1990. During this meeting, Grazio Pullicino proposed a motion to thank President Anthony Camilleri who had up to that point lent his family's private property in St Joseph Street for the committee's meetings.²² Despite this, the wish of the Central Committee along with the members and supporters was always for the band club to own its premises and for it to be in the centre of Birżebbuġa.²³

HELP FROM OUTSIDE BIRŻEBBUĠA

The Secretary General for the Banda San Ġużepp from Ħamrun sent a letter to the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa offering help through information regarding the addresses and contact numbers of the Maltese and Gozitan band clubs along with a copy of his band club's statute. Mr. C. Cremona sent a letter offering two marches composed by Major

¹⁸ Minutes 1990, Meeting 2, 23 rd January 1990

¹⁹ Minutes 1990, Meeting 3, 31 st January 1990

²⁰ ibid.

²¹ Minutes 1990, Meeting 7, 27 th February 1990

²² Minutes 1990, Meeting 5, 13 th February 1990

²³ Minutes 1991, Meeting 7, 16 th April 1991

Anthony Aquilina for the price of LM15 each.²⁴ An agreement was also reached with the Għaqda Banda Żejtun for the borrowing and lending of music between the two band clubs.²⁵ For the 1991 Christmas concert the Għaqda Mużikali San Lawrenz of Vittoriosa lent its tubular bells.²⁶ Another request for the borrowing of music was made to the Banda Sliema.²⁷ As time passed, the collaboration between the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa and other band clubs started increasing including with the 12th of May Band and Social Club from Żebbuġ, the Għaqda Mużikali La Stella from Gudja and the Għaqda Mużikali San Ġużepp from Għaxaq.²⁸

The Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa also started being asked to be of help to other band clubs. The Banda San Pawl from Ħal Safi asked the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa to lend it its musical stands for the titular feast, ²⁹ something which continued happening regularly.³⁰

INSTRUMENTATION

The interest of the pupils in the music lessons was met with huge enthusiasm from the Central Committee of the new band club and hence the need was felt to purchase new instruments for the pupils. Therefore, upon the suggestion of the Assistant Music Director, three new clarinets were bought from Carabott in Valletta. Along with these, a flute was also bought.³¹ More instruments continued being bought over the years so that the Banda Birżebbuġa, was able to provide the prospective pupil with the instrument one wanted to learn as much as possible.³²

THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FEAST'S ORGANISER

The Committee for the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa wanted to involve itself in the administration of the titular feast for Saint Peter the Apostle. Therefore, despite there being only a few months left before the 1990 feast, the committee wanted a delegation from its end to start meeting with the Parish Priest and the Festive Committee.³³ The Parish Priest, from his end sent a letter that the statute of the Banda Birżebbuġa didn't conform to the directives of the Church in Malta, and hence, a Spiritual Director couldn't be appointed for the new band club.³⁴

²⁴ Minutes 1990, Meeting 5, 13 th February 1990

²⁵ Minutes 1991, Meeting 21, 6 th November 1991

²⁶ Minutes 1991, Meeting 25, 7 th January 1992

²⁷ Minutes 1992, Meeting 4, 28 th February 1992

²⁸ Minutes 1994, Meeting 11, 14 th June 1994

²⁹ Minutes 1994, Meeting 1, 26 th January 1994

³⁰ ibid.

³¹ ibid.

³² ibid

³³ Minutes 1990, Meeting 6, 20 th February 1990

³⁴ ibid.

In March 1990, a meeting was held with the Parish Priest Fr. Pawl Buttigieg and the Festive Committee. The Parish Priest accepted the request to give a copy of the music for the Popular Hymn to Saint Peter, its lyrics written by Fr. Frans Camilleri and its music composed by Carmelo Pace, to the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa. The meeting was informed that in December 1989 a contract was signed with the Banda San Pietru for it to receive Lm600 for the festive marches, whilst the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was to receive a donation given that the march after the procession on Sunday evening was not held. The Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa accepted the Lm150 payment for Saturday's march with the condition regarding Sunday evening's march and expressed the wish that from the 1991 feast onwards, the two band clubs receive an equal amount of financial compensation from the parish. The Parish Priest also expressed the wish for a meeting to be held with the administrator of the two band clubs to reach an agreement.³⁵

During a meeting held on the 12th of May 1990, the Festive Committee offered a sum of Lm150 for the Banda Birżebbuġa to organise a march on Saturday eve of the Titular Feast, however, the new band club was promised that from starting in 1991, the money was to be split equally between the two band clubs.³⁶

In the meantime, the wish of the new band club to have a Spiritual Director persevered and this led to President Anthony Camilleri going to talk directly with Archbishop Mgr. Ġużeppi Mercieca, who from his end referred him to Vicar General, Mgr. Annetto Depasquale. The latter informed President Camilleri that the statute didn't comply with the Ecclesiastical Directives. Hence an agreement was reached that an Extraordinary General Meeting was to be held to effect the necessary amendments in the statute. The Committee informed the Parish Priest Fr. Pawl Buttigieg of this and asked for the appointment of a temporary Spiritual Director until the necessary changes were effected.³⁷

Due to a delay in the reply from the Parish Priest, the band club sent a letter directly to the Archbishop's Curia, asking for the appointment of a temporary Spiritual Director. The Curia notified the band club that it had received its letter. The later reply from Parish Priest Buttigieg expressed the fact that he was no longer going to be Birżebbuġa's Parish Priest, and hence he couldn't accept the request himself.³⁸ The same reply arrived after the reply from the Ecclesiastical Authorities, with the band club being asked to wait for the new Parish Priest to appoint a Spiritual Director. The Curia encouraged the band club to refer to the current Parish Priest when the need arises.³⁹ The new Parish Priest Fr Ġużepp M. Farrugia, appointed Fr Charles Carabott as the band club's Spiritual Director.⁴⁰

³⁵ Minutes 1990, Meeting 8, 13 th March 1990

³⁶ Minutes 1990, Meeting 13, 22 nd May 1990

³⁷ Minutes 1990, Meeting 9, 27 th March 1990

³⁸ Minutes 1990, Meeting 10, 10 th April 1990

³⁹ Minutes 1990, Meeting 12, 8 th May 1990

⁴⁰ Minutes 1990, Meeting 14, 5 th June 1990

THE FEAST OF THE CATHEDRA PETRI

Since on the 22nd of February, the Universal Church celebrates the feast of the Chair of Saint Peter (*Cathedra Petri*), and the titular statue is set up in the central lane of the parish church, the Central Committee started presenting a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the members in front of the titular statue on this dear day.⁴¹ The desire for this feast to be celebrated on a larger scale continued being felt by the members and supporters of the new band club, so much so that from the second year of the new band club celebrating the feast, there was the wish to organise a march.⁴² This wish was met with approval by the Annual General Meeting, however since in 1991 the Gulf War was still going on, the Central Committee informed the members that it was going to cancel the march. The same happened in 1992 since this feast was celebrated on a Saturday, clashing with a General Election.⁴³ Despite this, annually, the Central Committee continued celebrating this feast by participating in the Holy Mass and by decorating the band club's façade.⁴⁴

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A YOUTH COMMITTEE

The enthusiasm of several youths towards the titular feast and the new band club, which during the first months from its establishment had about 380 members, continued encouraging the first Committee leading the Ghaqda Mużikali Birżebbuġa to form a youth committee within the band club's structure. Hence what is today known as the *Sezzjoni Żgħażagħ Iljuni* was born. The first committee was composed of Raymond Cutajar, Frank Cachia, Michael Muscat, Peter Cassar, Kevin Camilleri, Alex Azzopardi, Stephen Camilleri, Eman Camilleri, Joe Cutajar and Louis Buhagiar. Raymond Cutajar and Kevin Camilleri were to also be representatives of this committee on the Central Committee, which from its end, whilst offering these youths all possible help, asked for its secretary to start handing in the minutes of the committee at the end of every month. The Youth Committee started working immediately and bought a march composed by John J. Pace *Ta' Marjan*. At the same time, a scheme for fundraising was initiated between the members to create equipment for the festivities during the feast's week. The first meeting of the Youth Section was held intentionally on the 22nd of February 1990, the feast of Cathedra Petri.

FLAGS OF HONOUR FOR MALTA AND THE VATICAN

Ronnie Galea and Josef Bonnici paid for a flag of honour each, one for Malta and one for the Vatican, known as *Tal-Papa*.⁴⁸ These were to be added with the band club's official

- 41 Minutes 1990, Meeting 6, 20 th February 1990
- 42 Minutes 1991, Meeting 2, 29 th January 1991
- 43 Minutes 1992, Meeting 2, 28 th January 1992
- 44 Minutes 1991, Meeting 3, 12 th February 1991
- 45 Minutes 1990, Meeting 6, 20 th February 1990
- 46 Minutes 1990, Meeting 7, 27 th February 1990
- 47 Minutes 1990, Meeting 11, 24 th April 1990
- 48 Minutes 1990, Meeting 8, 13 th March 1990

flag of honour,

THE FIRST RECORDING OF FESTIVE MARCHES

The concept of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa making a name for itself with a recording was there from the start, and hence, two hundred cassettes were brought to be used for the first recording. In the meantime, various composers offered some march music, and some members also sponsored some marches as well. The rehearsals for this recording were to be held on the 15th and 17th of May at the *Lucky Hall* and the recording was to be made on Saturday 19th of May.⁴⁹ For this recording a number of musical stands were borrowed from the Għaqda Mużikali San Mikiel from Żabbar and the Banda San Pawl from Hal Safi.⁵⁰

VARIOUS ACTIVITIES

For Holy Week, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa organized transport to the processions in Rabat and Qormi as well as an outing to the circus.⁵¹ From their end, the Youth Section organised a hike.⁵² On Sunday the 22nd of July 1990 a fair was also held along the Birżebbuġa promenade.⁵³ Another fair was held on the 15th of August 1990 as well as a barbeque at the end of August in Wied il-Buni.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, we cannot mention all the activities in this publication due to their amount and variety.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1990 FEAST

From its establishment, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa started planning to expand the titular feast, plans which continued intensifying as time passed. The parish's Festive Committee informed the band club that it was ready to pay Lm150 to the band club whilst the Central Committee started discussing the routes through which the Banda Birżebbuġa would be passing during the marches held during the feast's week. Since this was going to be the first week with the participation of two band clubs, the Central Committee agreed that an Extraordinary General Meeting would be held for the band club to inform its members that the titular feast was to be a means for peace and not pettiness. A proposal was also made for the committees of both band clubs to meet in the presence of the Parish Priest to encourage their members to work for the feast to be peaceful and for the Banda San Pietru to take back the dismissal of President Anthony Camilleri and the brothers Angelo and Raymond Cutajar, three out of the five founders of the new society.

⁴⁹ Minutes 1990, Meeting12, 8 th May 1990

⁵⁰ Minutes 1990, Meeting13, 22 nd May 1990

⁵¹ Minutes 1990, Meeting 9, 27 th March 1990

⁵² Minutes 1990, Meeting 11, 24 th April 1990

⁵³ Minutes 1990, Meeting 14, 5 th June 1990

⁵⁴ Minutes 1990, Meeting 19, 16 th August 1990

⁵⁵ Minutes 1990, Meeting 12, 8 th May 1990

⁵⁶ Minutes 1990, Meeting 15, 19 th June 1990

The Banda San Pietru accepted the invitation for this meeting and suggested that each band club be represented by four members. The meeting was held at the Parish House on Sunday the 8th of July 1990. Parish Priest Fr. Ġużepp M. Farrugia was also present along with three members from the Festive Committee. Parish Priest Farrugia insisted that it was a pleasure for this meeting to be held at the Parish House since this was a house for all the parish and demanded that any cause for division be forgotten. The Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa asked for the revocation of the dismissal of the three members as agreed, however, the Secretary for the Banda San Pietru said that the decision had to be taken by the whole committee. Along with members of the Festive Committee, the Secretary for the Banda San Pietru said that there weren't sufficient statue bearers to lift Saint Peter's statue during the march for the end of the Tridum. With a sense of maturity, the Committee for the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa offered that if any member of the band club wanted to help with bearing the statue, they could do so of their personal accord.

It was also decided that the band clubs play the Popular Hymn to Saint Peter in front of the opposing band club's headquarters and that the blessing of the Banda Birżebbuġa was to be done during the march on Thursday, in Borok Street, by its Spiritual Director.⁵⁷ However, the Parish Priest Fr. Ġużepp M. Farrugia blessed the band on the parvis during the first musical service which the Banda Birżebbuġa held on Thursday 2nd of August 1990.⁵⁸ In the meantime, five gas lamps were bought to accompany the band during the marches of the titular feaSt⁵⁹ Apart from this, for all services of the feast, meaning Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning, the Banda Birżebbuġa had to start the march by playing the Popular Hymn to Saint Peter and end it by playing the band club's hymn.⁶⁰

During a meeting with the Superintendent from the Birżebbuġa Police Station on the 19th of July 1990, the former expressed the wish that the Banda Birżebbuġa doesn't pass through Misraħ il-Knisja during the march on Sunday morning, however, the band club wanted to pass from this street. Hence an agreement was reached that the Banda Birżebbuġa was to pass through this street quickly, playing the Popular Hymn to Saint Peter in front of the opposing band club as agreed during the meeting with the Parish Priest, as well as other marches without taunting lyrics.⁶¹

It was also agreed that on the eve of the Feast, the Banda San Pietru was to end its concert at 11:00 pm and that the Banda Birżebbuġa played for fifteen minutes in the main square, ending its service at 11:15 pm, however, the Superintendent informed President Anthony Camilleri and Secretary Alexander Caruana that the Parish Priest had not accepted this agreement because of the setting off of the fireworks. President Anthony Camilleri insisted that if the Parish Priest

⁵⁷ Minutes 1990, Urgent Meeting, 9 th July 1990

⁵⁸ Minutes 1990, Meeting 18, 31 st July 1990

⁵⁹ Minutes 1990, Meeting 16, 3 rd July 1990

⁶⁰ Minutes 1990, Meeting 18, 31 st July 1990

⁶¹ ibid.

doesn't change his stance, the Banda Birzebbuga wouldn't play on the eve of the Titular FeaSt62

POPE JOHN PAUL II'S VISIT

Between Friday 25th and Sunday 27th of May, Pope Jean Paul II visited the Maltese islands. He didn't pass from Birżebbuġa, despite this village having a special bond with the Papacy, since it is dedicated to Saint Peter Apostle, who was the First Pope. For this occasion, the Central Committee decided to decorate the façade of the premises.⁶³ On the 20th of May 1990 the band club's premises was blessed for the first time as well.⁶⁴

FR. PAUL BUTTIGIEG'S THANKSGIVING MASS

The Parish Pastoral Council invited the band club to be present along with all the other local organisations for a thanksgiving mass for the end of Fr Pawl Buttigieg's service as Parish Priest who had decided to continue his work as a missionary. The Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was present and offered a Lm2 donation.⁶⁵

FR. GUŻEPP M. FARUGIA STARTS HIS PASTORAL WORK

On the 4th of June, a meeting was held with the new Parish Priest, Fr. Ġużepp M. Farrugia about the celebration of him starting his pastoral work in Birżebbuġa. He didn't want the band clubs to participate in this celebration, which was to be held on Sunday 24th of June 1990.⁵⁶ On the occasion of the Possession, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa presented the new Parish Priest with a Cross.⁶⁷ During this meeting, President Anthony Camilleri suggested that starting in 1991, both band clubs are given the opportunity to invite band clubs from other localities whilst the parish remunerates each band club with Lm250.⁶⁸

ESTABLISHMENT OF A WOMEN'S SECTION

Spira Farrugia was contacted such that the band club establishes a women's section to organise family-oriented events. The first activity was held a few weeks later, for the feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, on the eve of the Imnarja. ⁶⁹ The second outing was a visit to the *Fiera I-Kbira* (The Big Fair) held on the 13th of July 1990. ⁷⁰

THE 1990 TITULAR FEAST

In 1990, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa wasn't going to participate in the festivities on Monday after the statue of Saint Peter is taken out of the niche, but many supporters went to the church stairs with yellow and green flags. During that week, the enthusiasm was

- 62 ibid.
- 63 Minutes 1990, Meeting 12, 8 th May 1990
- 64 Minutes 1990, Meeting 13, 22 nd May 1990
- 65 Minutes 1990, Meeting 14, 5 th June 1990
- 66 Minutes 1990, Meeting 15, 19 th June 1990
- 67 Minutes 1990, Laqg]a 16, 3 rd July 1990
- 68 Minutes 1990, Meeting 14, 5 th June 1990
- 69 ibid
- 70 Minutes 1990, Meeting 15, 19 th June 1990

at its peak until at long last the awaited day arrived. It was Thursday the 2nd of August when from early in the evening many youths and children, all dressed in yellow shirts and bearing handkerchiefs and flags with the yellow and green colours went to the area known as Tal-Papa from where the first march by the Banda Birżebbuġa was to start. The Banda Birżebbuġa played for the first time at 8:00 pm in Borok Street. As appropriate, with strong emotions from the band club's administration, the Banda Birżebbuġa praised its Patron Saint by playing the Popular Hymn to Saint Peter. Accompanied by a huge number of supporters, the Banda Birżebbuġa continued its route until the march arrived in the main square. The band went up the parvis and the new Parish Priest Fr. Ġużepp M. Farrugia blessed the Banda Birżebbuġa amidst great joy. Exactly with the blessing, the band played its hymn composed by its Musical Director Michael Bugelli for the first time.⁷¹

Even though Friday, the last day of the Tridum was to be a difficult test for the Banda Birżebbuġa because the Banda Birżebbuġa was to organise a traditional march with Saint Peter's statue, this certainly was not the case because the feast enthusiasts went once again to accompany the Banda Birżebbuġa, something which also happened on Saturday evening, the eve of the feaSt⁷²

On the day of the Titular Feast, from early in the morning, a lot of supporters dressed in shirts made by the band club could be seen walking the streets of Birżebbuġa. At 10 in the morning, the Banda Birżebbuġa started a march from Misraħ il-Knisja. During this march, numerous feast enthusiasts from across Malta were present because they had heard of the spectacle the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was creating during the week of the titular feaSt This march continued to show that the Banda Birżebbuġa truly deserves the town's name because it had become the band club for the whole village with strong support being shown during the first feast it had participated in.⁷³

A NEW ASSISTANT MUSICAL DIRECTOR

After the 1990 titular feast, the Central Committee felt that it should terminate the contract of Mro Joseph L. Vella as Assistant Musical Director and instead appoint Mro. Simon Farrugia for a monthly payment of Lm10.⁷⁴ As a means of thanksgiving, the band club presented Mro. Vella with a pen bearing the band club's insignia.⁷⁵

GROUP OF FIREWORK ENTHUSIASTS

The band club from its establishment had wanted to expand the titular feast, and hence it

⁷¹ Caruana A. (2015); Xi Episodji Interessanti li graw f'Birżebbuga li kkontribwew biex titwaqqaf is-Socjetà tagħna 25 sena ilu; Annual Pubblication for the Titular Feast 2015, Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru Banda Birżebbuga

⁷² ibid.

⁷³ Official video of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, 1990

⁷⁴ Minutes 1990, Meeting 20, 28 th August 1990

⁷⁵ ibid.

took care of also establishing a subcommittee for firework enthusiasts.⁷⁶ The first members of this subcommittee were President Anthony Camilleri who was also made President of the subcommittee, Vice President Alexander Caruana, Secretary Lawrence Aquilina, Assistant Secretary Michael Vella, Treasurer Simon Galea, Assistant Treasurer Peter Camilleri, whilst Louis Zammit, Angelo Fenech and Thaddeo Agius were members.⁷⁷

THE GARA MUŻIKALI

As a musical organisation with a number of pupils, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa applied to participate in the *Gara Mużikali*, both through theory and practical exams.⁷⁸ The 1990 edition saw the participation of fourteen musical organisations.⁷⁹ The Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa achieved immensely encouraging results.⁸⁰ The pupils who participated were Lydia Tabone, Johan Briffa, Ruth Caruana, Tania Agius, and Johann Polidano.⁸¹

THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF OUR LADY IN BENGHAJSA

The Central Committee started discussing the possibility of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa also performing for the first time for the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady which was held at the chapel in Bengħajsa, in the outskirts of Birżebbuġa with a march in the square in front of the chapel and the streets which led to it on the 8th of December. The service was confirmed with the inhabitants of Bengħajsa in no time, and hence the Banda Birżebbuġa also organised a march in Bengħajsa starting at 6:00 pm. The inhabitants of Bengħajsa presented the band club with a light blue standard bearing the Holy Mary's insignia, which standard is found along with the other standards in the headquarters' halls. At the beginning of the year 1994, the band club contacted Francis Schembri, the Procurator of the feast of the Immaculate Conception in Bengħajsa, so that it starts participating in this feast on the 8th of December once again. Through correspondence, it was explained to the the band club that the band clubs participate in an alternating manner and hence the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was to participate again 1995.

MASS IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE BAND CLUB'S MEMBERS

From the first year of its establishment, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa started remembering its members who had passed away with a mass in November, a mass which

⁷⁶ ibid.

⁷⁷ Minutes 1990, Meeting 21, 11 th September 1990

⁷⁸ Minutes 1990, Meeting 22, 26 th September 1990

⁷⁹ Minutes 1990, Meeting 24, 23 rd October 1990

⁸⁰ Minutes 1990, Meeting 27, 4 th December 1990

⁸¹ ibid.

⁸² Minutes 1990, Meeting 22, 26 th September 1990

⁸³ Minutes 1990, Meeting 23, 9 th October 1990

⁸⁴ Minutes 1990, Meeting 28, 18 th December 1990

⁸⁵ Minutes 1994, Meeting 3, 22 nd February 1994

was to be held annually.⁸⁶ In the meantime, a lotto office was rented from Toni Muscat, and after refurbishments, it was opened on the 1st of November 1990.⁸⁷

PLANS FOR CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES 1990

A donation box was placed in the band club's bar for those who wanted to donate towards four local fishermen who had issues with their boat. Apart from this, the Central Committee also decided to collect funds for the Community Chest Fund. A Dinner Dance was to be held on the 27th of December, a children's party on the 29th of December and a service by the Banda Birżebbuġa on the 30th of December. From the first year of its establishment, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa also published a calendar and distributed it with its members and other enthusiasts.⁸⁸

DISCUSSIONS FOR THE 1991 FEAST

After the first feast, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa increased its active membership base to 588 members.⁸⁹

Once the 1990 titular feast was over, the members of the band club expressed the wish for a meeting of the parish's Festive Committee to be held. The wish was for each band club to be paid Lm250 and for both band clubs to be allowed to invite a band for Sunday evening instead of the parish.⁹⁰ In October, the Parish Priest informed both band clubs that they would be receiving a Lm150 donation from the parish for their participation in the 1991 titular feaSt. The Central Committee reverted by asking if they could invite a band from another locality for Sunday evening's service and if Saint Peter's statue could be used during the march for the last day of the Tridum.⁹¹

The Parish Priest Ġużepp M. Farrugia reverted by asking both band clubs to reach an agreement regarding the use of Saint Peter's statue during the march. It was made clear that if an agreement wasn't reached, either one of the band clubs had to have a statue made or otherwise the parish's statue would be placed on the pedestal without the participation of either band club. Faced with these conditions, the Central Committee agreed to commission a statue of Saint Peter for it to be entirely the property of the band club.⁹²

Hence representatives of the Central Committee went to Chevalier Alfred Camilleri Cauchi and Renzo Gauci asking for quotes for a statue of Saint Peter to be made for the band

⁸⁶ Minutes 1990, Meeting 28, 18 th December 1990

⁸⁷ Minutes 1990, Meeting 24, 23 rd October 1990

⁸⁸ ibid

⁸⁹ Minutes 1990, Meeting 19, 16 th August 1990

⁹⁰ ibid.

⁹¹ Minutes 1990, Meeting 24, 23 rd October 1990

⁹² Minutes 1990, Meeting 25, 6 th November 1990

club. Camilleri Cauchi asked for Lm650 whilst Gauci asked for Lm300. Despite this price difference, the Committee preferred Camilleri Cauchi's design.⁹³

Once it started being used, Saint Peter the Apostle's statue was to be set up near the band club's premises, and hence, until a new property was found to be used as premises, it was to be set up at St George's Bay.⁹⁴

The discussions continued, and on the 19th of February 1991 a meeting was held between representatives of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa and Parish Priest Ġużepp M. Farrugia regarding the financing of the fireworks, whilst on the 27th February 1991, representatives of the band club attended a meeting with Vicar General, Mgr. Annetto Depasquale at the Archbishop's Curia. The Spiritual Director Fr. Charles Carabott and the Parochial Presbyterial Secretary were also present for this meeting.⁹⁵

During a meeting held with the Parish Priest Father Ġużepp M. Farrugia on February 21st 1991, President Anthony Camilleri and Treasurer Jason Vella were present on behalf of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa. The Parish Priest suggested that only the Popular Hymn was played, by both local band clubs, whilst the statue was on the church's parvis during its exposition. The representatives of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa suggested that the band club's hymn or the marching hymn is played apart from the Popular Hymn. The Parish Priest promised a reply on this matter.⁹⁶

The participation of the Banda Birżebbuġa on the eve of the Titular Feast was to be a concert at Pretty Bay followed by a march to the premises at Saint George's Bay. The Parish Priest wanted the march to end in front of the Parish Church, however, the Central Committee wanted it to end in front of the band club's premises.⁹⁷

A couple of meetings were also held with the Parish Priest regarding the band club's involvement in the setting off of fireworks and it was agreed that the band club was to be given Lm400 as well as payment for insurance coverage.⁹⁸

THE BAND CLUB'S PARTICIPATION IN SAINT CECILIA'S FEAST

Saint Cecilia, virgin and martyr, is the patron saint of music and musicians and her liturgical feast is on the 22nd of November. The Malta Band Club Association organises a mass and a march in Valletta annually with the participation of one of its member band clubs as well as a symphonic concert from another member band club at the Manoel Theatre someday

⁹³ Minutes 1990, Meeting 26, 20 th November 1990

⁹⁴ Minutes 1990, Meeting 30, 10 th January 1991

⁹⁵ Minutes 1991, Meeting 4, 26 th February 1991

⁹⁶ Minutes 1991, Meeting 8, 30 th April 1991

⁹⁷ ibid

⁹⁸ Minutes 1991, Meeting 12, 25 th June 1991

near the feaSt From its establishment, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa participated with its flag of honour and was represented by its Central Committee during the mass and the march, which in 1990 was held on the 17th of November. Apart from this, on the 22nd of November, the band club's flag was flown, and the flagpole was lit.⁹⁹ Every year, given that the weather permits, the flag is still flown on the day which liturgically celebrates the patron saint of music and musicians.

END OF 1990

The 5th of December was the first anniversary of the concept of the establishment of a new band club whilst the 14th of December was the first anniversary of the first meeting of the Provisional Committee. These anniversaries were to be celebrated by flying the band club's flag from the premises' rooftop.¹⁰⁰ In the meantime the band club's bar was passed onto Charles Muscat whilst the band club's members had exceeded 600 by the end of 1990.¹⁰¹ The interest in the band club continued increasing through individuals who were interested in forming part of the Central Committee. In fact, during the second Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 13th January 1991 an election had to be held because by the end of the nomination period, on the 6th of January 1991, 14 nominations had been received.¹⁰²

The formation of the Central Committee for 1991 was composed of President Anthony Camilleri, Vice President Emanuel Mangion, Secretary Alexander Caruana, Assistant Secretary Kevin Camilleri, Treasurer Jason Vella, Assistant Treasurer Emanuel Zammit, Director General Louis Balzia, Assistant Director Joe Cutajar, Public Relations Officer and Editor Joseph Caruana, Archivist Grezzju Pullicino as well as members Thaddeo Agius and Saviour Carabott. Alexander Caruana also started serving as the representative at the Malta Band Club Association, and Band Delegate along with Alfred Piscopo.¹⁰³

THE MUSICAL ARCHIVES

The Banda Birżebbuġa, like all other serious band clubs, didn't want to restrict itself to marches but also wanted to hold vocal and instrumental concerts. Since it didn't own musical pieces, the band club started planning to develop its musical archives. Hence the Central Committee sent a letter to the Għaqda Mużikali San Mikiel from Żabbar to send them copies of the music for Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida* and Pietro Mascagni's *Cavelleria Rusticana*. ¹⁰⁴

The Socjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuga also wanted to make a name for itself on public

⁹⁹ Minutes 1990, Meeting 26, 20 th November 1990

¹⁰⁰ Minutes 1990, Meeting 27, 4 th December 1990

¹⁰¹ Minutes 1990, Meeting 28, 18 th December 1990

¹⁰² Minutes 1990, Meeting 30, 10 th January 1991

¹⁰³ Minutes 1991, Meeting 1, 15 th January 1991

¹⁰⁴ Minutes 1991, Meeting 4, 26 th February 1991

broadcasting and hence it sent a letter and a copy of its cassette to *Xandir Malta* for it to include marches published by the band club in its first year during its programs dedicated to Maltese march music.¹⁰⁵

SAINT PETER'S STATUE

After a meeting at the Archbishop's Curia on the 27th of February 1991, it was clear that there was going to be a lack of agreement on the services on Monday and Friday of the titular feast's week. On Monday, when the statue is taken out from its niche, both local band clubs were to play on the church parvis. Discussions on if the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was to be allowed to use the parish's statue were appearing likely to fail, and hence the band club confirmed the decision to have a statue of its own, for the commissioned statue to hence be its own property, and for which statue it already had a design from Chevalier Alfred Camilleri Cauchi. During this meeting, the Vicar explained that the establishment of new band clubs was for them to add to what was already being held and not to take what was currently being held off the hands of the other band clubs. The Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, hence sent a letter in protest to the Vicar General to express its hurt that the heritage which belonged to the Birżebbuġa locals was going to be enjoyed by a few locals and not by everyone. 106

From his end, Fr. Ġwann Galea, the Delegate for the Archbishop to the Parishes sent a letter to the band club regarding the meeting on the 27th of February 1991, the contents of which letter not aligning with what was said during the meeting, with the Vicar General explaining that his stance on the matter wasn't going to change. Secretary Alexander Caruana sent a letter to the Parochial Presbytery, the Secretary for the Parish Pastoral Council and the Secretary for External Feasts, however, the band club received no response.

Another meeting was held with the Vicar on the 25th of March 1991, with the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa insisting that the decision for it not to be allowed to use Saint Peter's statute was not fair because the statue was the property of all the locals and not a selected few. The Delegate for the Archbishop to the Parishes suggested that the demonstration's route be shared, something which the band club saw difficult to achieve. Hence the Committee for the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa suggested that for the march during the second day of the Tridum, the parish's statue be lent to the band club for use during the march, whilst a demonstration is held on Friday as per usual. The Vicar General, Mgr. Annetto Depasquale asked the band club to talk to the Parish Priest regarding this proposal, because the former had agreed with this proposal from his end, and asked for the Parish Priest's response to be sent in writing.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Minutes 1991, Urgent Meeting, 5 th March 1991

¹⁰⁷ Minutes 1991, Meeting 5, 21 st March 1991

¹⁰⁸ ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Minutes 1991, Meeting 6, 2 nd April 1991

There were various attempts and suggestions for the band club not to have its own statue made, however, the Central Committee was not ready to revise its stance. 110

MORE INITIATIVES FOR THE 1991 TITULAR FEAST

Intending to increase interest in the festive decorations, the Youth Section had the idea of organising two competitions for the locals, one for the best-looking festive umbrella and the other for the best-looking flag.111 The result was to be announced at the end of the morning march on Sunday.¹¹² A video for all the days of the feast's week was also booked. Spiridione Camilleri offered to collect funds for the band club such that a march dedicated to fireworks could be held on Sunday after the Sacramental Blessing. 113

BANDSTAND FOR THE CONCERT ON THE FEAST'S EVE

The Central Committee for the Società Filarmonika Birżebbuga contacted the Ghagda Mużikali Marija Annunzjata from Tarxien to rent the bandstand (plancier) so that the band performs on it for the concert on the eve of the Titular Feast to achieve a more professional look. The Għaqda Mużikali Marija Annunzjata was also ready to lease its bandstand for Lm30.¹¹⁴ In the meantime, the Socjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuga continued building its contacts with other band clubs through various invitations, including one for the musical concert by the Banda Konti Ruggieru from Rabat 115 and the Banda Cittadina King's Own from Valletta. 116 The invitations never stopped and several band clubs invite the band club to their activities up to this day, something the band clubs tries to honour in respect.¹¹⁷

The rehearsals for the first concert by the Banda Birzebbuga started on the 21st of June 1991 at the White Horse Inn. 118 As time passed, given the lack of premises with a big enough hall to accommodate a symphonic band, the rehearsals had to be transferred and were even done out in the open, so much so that the general rehearsals were done in the garden at St George's Bay.¹¹⁹ For this concert, the Banda Birżebbuga found the help of various other organisations, both in Birżebbuga and from other localities. The Banda De Paule from Paola lent two kettle drums whilst the Labour Party's social club lent chairs for the musicians to sit on. 120

¹¹⁰ Minutes 1991, Meeting 8, 30 th April 1991

¹¹¹ Minutes 1991, Meeting 9, 14 th May 1991

Minutes 1991, Meeting 14, 19 th July 1991 112

Minutes 1991, Meeting 9, 14 th May 1991 113

Minutes 1991, Meeting 10, 28 th May 1991 114

¹¹⁵ Minutes 1991, Meeting 9, 14 th May 1991

Minutes 1991, Meeting 10, 28 th May 1991

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Minutes 1994, Meeting 6, 7 th April 1994 117 118 Minutes 1991, Meeting 11, 11 th June 1991

Minutes 1991, Meeting 13, 9 th July 1991 119

¹²⁰ Minutes 1991, Meeting 11, 11 th June 1991

THE 1991 TITULAR FEAST

This was the second feast for this band club, and because of planning throughout the year and the experience gained from the first feast, the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru was better prepared. During this feast, after meetings with all the organisations that participate throughout the year, the Banda Birżebbuga gave its first greeting to Saint Peter on the occasion of the statue being taken out from its niche; since it had not participated in the previous year. The band club then participated in a march in the Tal-Papa area on Thursday during which it was accompanied by the parish's statue. At long last, Friday arrived, the last day of the Tridum, one of the days which will be forever written in gold calligraphy in the band club's history. The band club used its statue, made by Chevalier Alfred Camilleri Cauchi, for the first time, accompanied by various boats decorated for the occasion. The statue was brought to Birżebbuġa on a boat from Marsaxlokk, and this is still done every year the statue has an anniversary. On Saturday, the feast's eve, the Banda Birżebbuga held its first musical concert next to the Hi-Ho Bar. Today, the restaurant La Spiaggia in Pretty Bay is at the location where this concert was held. Exactly after a march was held in Zaren Dalli Street, where for the first time the band club set off its own fireworks. The following morning on Sunday, the Banda Birżebbuga travelled along the streets of Birżebbuga during the march. For this march, the Youth Section had made a lion using papier mache, which remained in use until 1998. The participation of the band club in this feast continued confirming that the Banda Birżebbuga, with its yellow and green colours, was the natural choice for the Birżebbuga locals.

ROSARY AT THE BAND CLUB PREMISES

Every year, during October, the month dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, a day was chosen for the Holy Rosary to be recited at the band club's premises. This was an idea from the Honorary President, Architect Michael Schembri who was also a member of the Legion of Mary ¹²¹ and the parish's Rector for the *Fratellanza* dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, which was founded in 1914, a year after the official establishment of the parish, something which shows how strong the devotion to Mary in the Birżebbuġa parish was from the start.

CONCERT AT THE LOTTO OFFICE

For a number of years, during which the lottery offices weren't administered by a private corporation, several offices would sponsor an annual concert in which the band club participated. The first concert held by the *Banka tal-Lottu* with the participation of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was on Sunday 20th of December 1991 with a Christmas theme at the Independence Garden in Republic Square which was then followed by a short march.¹²² This was after permission was obtained in writing that the band club was to have its own lotto office.¹²³ In 1992, a concert was held in Misraħ il-Knisja on Palm Sunday after

¹²¹ Minutes 1991, Meeting 18, 24 th September 1991

¹²² Minutes 1991, Meeting 20, 22 nd October 1991

¹²³ Minutes 1991, Meeting 21, 6 th November 1991

the church function ended.¹²⁴ In 1995, the band club's lotto office was in Alexander Street.

MUSICAL SERVICES OUTSIDE OF BIRŻEBBUĠA

A few months after its establishment, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa started receiving invitations for the band to play outside of Birżebbuġa. The band club's administration always felt a local band club participating outside of Birżebbuġa was an honour not only for the band club but also for the whole locality. The first time that the band club played outside of Birżebbuġa was for the feast of Saint Paul's Shipwreck in Valletta, during the demonstration for the feast's third day of the Tridum on the 8th of February 1992.¹²⁵

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

For Christmas, apart from the Dinner Dance and the musical service by the Banda Birżebbuġa, a children's party started being held.¹²⁶ In 1992, musicians from the Banda Birżebbuġa prepared a selection of appropriate music to be played during this party.¹²⁷

THE CENTAL COMMITTEE FOR 1992

At the start of 1992, the third appointment of the administrative committee for the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was held. This was done with a General Meeting on the 12th of January 1992. President Anthony Camilleri was once again reappointed whilst Emanuel Mangion served as Vice President. Alexander Caruana was reappointed as Secretary General, assisted by Alex Azzopardi. Grezzju Pullicino was appointed Treasurer assisted by Alfred Piscopo, whilst Louis Balzia was appointed Director General assisted by Joe and Angelo Cutajar. Joseph Caruana was reappointed as Public Relations Officer. The band's delegates were Joseph Caruana and Alfred Piscopo whilst Emanuel Mangion was the representative at the Malta Band Club Association and Peter Taylor was the band club's Director for Sports. 128

NEW ASSISTANT MUSICAL DIRECTOR

The Central Committee felt that it should terminate Mro Simon Farrugia's appointment as Assistant Musical Director and instead appointed Mro Felicienne Paris to this role. Mro Felicienne Paris was also the Musical Director for the Parish Choir and is a Birżebbuġa local.¹²⁹

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BANDA SAN LAWRENZ FROM VITTORIOSA

Representatives of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, met with representatives from the Soċjetà Mużikali San Lawrenz from Vittoriosa on the 2nd of February 1992 to organise

¹²⁴ Minutes 1992, Meeting 4, 28 th February 1992

¹²⁵ Minutes 1991, Meeting 21, 6 th November 1991

¹²⁶ Minutes 1991, Meeting 22, 19 th November 1991

¹²⁷ Minutes 1992, Meeting 23, 30 th November 1992

¹²⁸ Minutes 1992, Meeting 1, 12 th January 1992

¹²⁹ Minutes 1992, Meeting 2, 28 th January 1992

a concert with the participation of the two band clubs.¹³⁰ It was already agreed that four oncerts were to be held in Vittoriosa and three in Biżebbuġa.¹³¹ At the time the number of pupils learning music at the Banda Birżebbuġa continued increasing, so much so that the Musical Director was teaching sixteen pupils whilst the Assistant Musical Director was teaching twenty-one. For the 1992 *Gara Mużikali's* exams, eleven pupils participated on behalf of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa.¹³²

RECORDING OF FESTIVE MARCHES 1992

Numerous festive marches had been gifted to the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, and hence a selection of marches had to be chosen for a cassette recording. The recording was to be held at Boffa Studios in Paola. The recording was made on Monday the 23rd of March 1992 with the cover of the product being printed with the band club's statue of Saint Peter and its insignia. Saint Peter and its insignia.

NEW ASSISTANT MUSICAL DIRECTOR

It was decided that Mro Felicienne Paris should continue teaching music theory to the Banda Birżebbuġa's pupils but not woodwind instruments, and hence representatives of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, following advice by the Musical Director Mro. Michael Bugelli appointed Mro Charles Wallace Suda as Assistant Musical Director for the Banda Birżebbuġa as well as a teacher for woodwind instruments effective from the 1st of June 1992. Mro Paris wanted no remuneration for her work, however, the Central Committee decided to reimburse her monthly nevertheless. 136

MORE INVITATIONS FOR THE BANDA BIRZEBBUĠA

The popularity of the Banda Birżebbuġa continued growing so much so that it was invited to play in more localities around Malta. On the 21st of July 1992, it was invited for a march for the feast of Christ the King in Paola along with the Banda De Paule. ¹³⁷ Furthermore, on the 13th of August it was invited by the parish of Saint Mary in Gudja for a march around the roads of the locality on the occasion of the titular feast to Saint Mary. ¹³⁸ For 1993, whilst the service for the feast of St Paul in Valletta was confirmed along with that in Gudja, an invitation was also received from the Għaqda Mużikali San Ġużepp from Kirkop for the Banda Birżebbuġa to participate in a march around the town for the feast of Saint Joseph, on the 27th of May 1993. ¹³⁹ In 1993, the Banda Birżebbuġa was also invited for a musical

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130 ibid.
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¹³¹ Minutes 1992, Meeting 3, 11 th February 1992

¹³² Minutes 1992, Meeting 2, 28 th January 1992

¹³³ Minutes 1992, Extraordinary Meeting, 13 th February 1992

¹³⁴ Minutes 1992, Meeting5, 10 th March 1992

¹³⁵ Minutes 1992, Meeting 9, 18 th May 1992

¹³⁶ Minutes 1992, Meeting 18, 22 nd September 1992

¹³⁷ Minutes 1992, Meeting 9, 18 th May 1992

¹³⁸ Minutes 1992, Meeting 11, 16 th June 1992

¹³⁹ Minutes 1992, Meeting 25, 5 th January 1993

service for the feast of Our Lady of the Carmel, in Fgura, on the 11th of July. 140 The Banda Birżebbuġa was also chosen to play at the *Trade Fair*. 141

THE NATIONAL YOUTH BAND

The Malta Band Club Association, sent correspondence to the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa asking for the local musician Johan Briffa to form part of the National Youth Band.¹⁴²

PHILATROPICAL SERVICES

With the aim of cheering up people with special needs, the idea of the Banda Birżebbuġa playing at various places during particular times of the year was born, especially for Christmas. This wasn't to affect the other activities and services which the Banda Birżebbuġa held during these times in Birżebbuġa. In 1992, the wish for a service to be held at Mount Carmel Hospital was expressed. This service was held on the 4th of January 1993.

THE 1993 CENTRAL COMMITTEE

During the 4th Annual General Meeting since the establishment of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa the following committee was elected led by President Anthony Camilleri assisted by Emanuel Mangion in the role of Vice President. Alexander Caruana kept his place as Secretary assisted by Alex Azzopardi whilst Grazio Pullicino assisted by Charlie Galea was the band club's Treasurer. Louis Balzia kept his place as Director General and during this year he was assisted by Joe Zammit and Anton Cutajar. The brothers Alexander and Joseph Caruana were appointed band delegates whilst Joseph Caruana and Johan Briffa were appointed as the band club's archivists. The Public Relations Officer was Joseph Caruana, whilst Emanuel Mangion represented the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa at the Malta Band Club Association. The same Mangion and Alex Azzopardi were appointed Directors for Sports. Anton Cutajar and Johan Briffa started representing the Youth Section on the Central Committee. An Editorial Board was formed for another year with Joseph Caruana being appointed as Editor. A Band Commission was also to be formed.

PEDESTAL FOR SAINT PETER'S STATUE

The Saint Peter statue belonging to the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa continued being beautified with a gilded pedestal designed by Secretary Alexander Caruana. The pedestal

¹⁴⁰ Minutes 1993, Meeting 7, 7 th April 1993

¹⁴¹ Minutes 1993, Meeting 11, 1 st June 1993

¹⁴² Minutes 1992, Meeting 15, 11 th August 1992

¹⁴³ Minutes 1992, Meeting 22, 17 th November 1992

¹⁴⁴ Minutes 1992, Meeting 23, 30 th November 1992

¹⁴⁵ Minutes 1992, Meeting 24, 15 th December 1992

¹⁴⁶ Minutes 1993, Meeting 1, 12 th January 1993

¹⁴⁷ ibid.

was made by former Treasurer Grazio Pullicino and member Joe Zammit. A column was also made for this statue by Alexander Caruana and Joe Cutajar. Usa Cutajar. Statue by Alexander Caruana and Joe Cutajar.

AN INVITATION FROM THE MALTESE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

For the occasion of the Games of the Small States of Europe which were held in Malta in 1993, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was invited with various other organisations to participate in the sprint with the Olympic torch. After an agreement was reached, this opportunity was taken.¹⁵⁰

AN INVITATION FROM THE BIRZEBBUGA TIGERS

The football club *Birżebbuġa Tigers* invited the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa for a musical service on the occasion of their national success in June.¹⁵¹ Another similar invitation was made from the same club the following year on the 5th of June 1994.¹⁵²

THE 1993 TITULAR FEAST

The 1993 titular feast was a particular one for Birżebbuġa because for the first time since the establishment of the parish, thanks to initiatives by the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, there were daily musical services, from Monday, when the statue is taken out from its niche to the following Monday, the day after the titular feaSt¹⁵³

THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BANDA SAN PIETRU

Despite the shock at the start, as time passed, the relationship between the committee of the two local band clubs started improving leading to a betterment of their acceptance of each other. Before the 1993 titular feast, meetings were held with the Parish Priest Fr. Ġużepp M. Farrugia, the Festive Committee, the Banda Birżebbuġa and the Banda San Pietru. During these meetings, the week of the titular feast was planned, and an agreement was reached to start meeting in September to start planning for the 1994 feast, including the matter of inviting band clubs from other localities for Sunday evening. ¹⁵⁴ With the establishment of a Local Council in Birżebbuġa, the band clubs continued improving their relationship. The Local Council's Secretary along with the Councillor responsible for the local band clubs Teddy Kenely met with representatives of the band club and offered their help with regard to the betterment of the relationship with the other band club. ¹⁵⁵ With a sense of maturity and responsibility, the Central Committee condemned with no reservations the vandal act which

- 148 Minutes 1993, Meeting 4, 23 rd February 1993
- 149 Minutes 1993, Meeting 10, 18 th May 1993
- 150 Minutes 1993, Meeting 5, 9 th March 1993
- 151 Minutes 1993, Meeting 13, 29 th June 1993
- 152 Minutes 1994, Meeting 9, 17 th May 1994
- 153 Minn Qalb I-Iljuni, Annual Pubblication for the Titular Feast, Socjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuga (1993)
- 154 Minutes 1993, Meeting 14, 13 th July 1993
- 155 Minutes 1994, Meeting 5, 22 nd March 1994

had damaged the marble sign bearing the name "Palazz San Pietru" which decorated the façade of the Banda San Pietru's premises. The number and identity of the perpetrators were unknown but the act happened after the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa decided to name its premises with the same name. Despite this clash, the Committee for the Banda San Pietru decided to name its premises with the same name resulting in the Central Committee for the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa sending a letter to express disappointment at the failure to reach an agreement. With a sense of civil fraternity, the Committee for the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa decided that the members should decide on a different name during the Annual General Meeting, which was held on the 15th of January 1995.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE 1994

After the Annual General Meeting in January 1994, a new Central Committee was appointed, once again led by President and Founder Anthony Camilleri who was assisted by Emanuel Mangion. A new Secretary General was elected as Alexander Caruana's successor, Alex Azzopardi. Azzopardi was assisted by Louis Balzia. Grazio Pullicino kept the position of Treasurer which had required meticulous attention for the past years because of the immense expenses which the band club had been facing. Pullicino was assisted by Charlie Galea. Francis Zammit occupied the position of Director General assisted by Joe and Angelo Cutajar. Alfred Piscopo and Grazio Pullicino were appointed band delegates, Louis Balzia was appointed Public Relations Officer, Emanuel Mangion was appointed as the representative of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa at the Malta Band Club Association whilst Pierre Zammit was appointed Director for Sports. The Band, Women and Youth Committees were also appointed. The Central Committee also proposed that a festive march is named for the ex-Secretary Alexander Caruana and Mary Camilleri as recognition of their work for the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa. The Central Committee also proposed that a festive march is named for the ex-Secretary Alexander Caruana and Mary Camilleri as recognition of their work for the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa.

RECORDING OF FESTIVE MARCHES 1994

The Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, as it had done every two years from its establishment, recorded a new cassette of festive marches on the 5th of April 1994. 163

RECEPTION FOR THE LOCAL COUNCIL

A Local Council was established in Birżebbuġa in 1994, and the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa welcomed Mayor Joseph Farrugia, the Councillors and the Local Council's staff at its premises for a reception on the 14th of April 1994.¹⁶⁴

- 156 Minutes 1994, Meeting 16, 18 th October 1994
- 157 ibid.
- 158 Minutes 1994, Meeting 18, 15 th November 1994
- 159 Minutes 1994, Meeting 19, 29 th November 1994
- 160 Minutes 1994, Meeting 1, 26 th January 1994
- 161 Minutes 1994, Meeting 2, 8 th February 1994
- 162 Minutes 1994, Meeting 1, 26 th January 1994
- 163 Minutes 1994, Meeting 5, 22 nd March 1994
- 164 Minutes 1994, Meeting 6, 7 th April 1994

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY FROM THE ORDINATION OF THE PARISH PRIEST

The Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was invited to and attended a thanksgiving mass for Parish Fr. Ġużepp M. Farrugia at the parish church dedicated to Saint Peter the Apostle in Birżebbuġa. This mass was held to thank God for the Silver Jubilee since the Parish Priest's Sacerdotal Ordination.¹⁶⁵

WORLD FAMILY DAY

The Birżebbuġa Local Council organised a day of family-oriented activities on the 24th of July 1994. The Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was invited to participate, and it accepted the invitation. However, due to expenses related to the construction of the headquarters, the band didn't perform. The social series of the construction of the headquarters, the band didn't perform.

A NEW UNIFORM FOR THE BAND'S MUSICIANS

A need was felt for the musician's uniforms to be in green, the principal colour of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, instead of yellow. This project was initiated with a new set of shoulder pads. The band club also appointed *Pinkishline Photo Studio* as its official photographer. The band club also appointed *Pinkishline Photo Studio* as its official photographer.

THE 1994 TITULAR FEAST

Since the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was fully focused on the construction of the new premises, the fifth titular feast couldn't see the participation of the band club spread across the week as was done in 1993. On Monday, when the statue was taken out of its niche, the Banda Birżebbuġa played as per usual on the church parvis with a subsequent march along the roads near the parish church. On the parvis, during the exposition of Saint Peter's statue, both band clubs played the Popular Hymn.¹⁷⁰ On Tuesday a general rehearsal was held in the garden at St George's Bay and afterwards a *Red Leaf Night* at the old band club premises. On Friday a sea demonstration was held with Saint Peter's statue followed by a festive march. On Saturday, the eve of the feast a short march was held followed by a concert whilst on the day of the feast the morning march was held.¹⁷¹

A COLUMN FOR SAINT PETER'S STATUE

Since the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was changing its operational address, from St George's Bay to Birżebbuġa Street, a need was felt for the band club's statue to be set up at Pretty Bay after the demonstration of the third day of the Tridum such that it is near the new premises. For the statue to be beautifully presented, a new design for the column

¹⁶⁵ ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Minutes 1994, Meeting 9, 17 th May 1994

¹⁶⁷ Minutes 1994, Meeting 10, 30 th May 1994

¹⁶⁸ Minutes 1994, Meeting 9, 17 th May 1994

¹⁶⁹ Minutes 1994, Meeting 12, 29 th June 1994

¹⁷⁰ Video of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, Titular Feast 1994

¹⁷¹ Minn Qalb I-Iljuni, Annual Pubblication for the Titular Feast, Socjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuga (1993)

upon which the statue was exposited was to be made. President Anthony Camilleri was willing to pay for this project himself.¹⁷² The new column was made by the brothers Joe, Angelo and Raymond Cutajar.¹⁷³

THE SHED (IR-REMISSA)

There was a shed next to the new premises and this became property of the band club for a price of Lm3,500. An anonymous benefactor lent this money to the band club for this investment. The contract for the property's purchase was signed on the 26th of October 1994.¹⁷⁴

THE CONCERT AT THE LOTTO OFFICE 1995

The Central Committee suggested that in 1995, the concert with the Lotto Office is held at the Kordin prison to cheer up the residents and staff.¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately, due to a lack of space this couldn't go through.¹⁷⁶ Hence the concert was scheduled for the 3rd of December 1995 in Immaculate Conception Street, Benghajsa for the days of the feast celebrated in this area.¹⁷⁷

THE BAND CLUB GAINS POPULARITY LOCALLY AND ABROAD

Several individuals from outside Birżebbuġa and broadcasters on both local radio and television asked for the history of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa. Amongst these was Ray Azzopardi for Super One Radio and the Pubblikazzjonijiet Indipendenza.

As the feast of Saint Peter Apostle approached, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa annually accepted the invitations which it received from various main broadcasters such as *Super One Radio* and *Radio* 101. Apart from this, the band club presented several cassettes to the Radju Malta Nazzjonali and these started being broadcasted during programmes dedicated to Maltese band clubs. From his end, Raymond Grima, a migrant from Australia and one of the organisers of the feast dedicated to Saint Peter, on the second Sunday of August, asked for the band club's history and a biographical excerpt on its Musical Director Michael Bugelli. This information was published in the Maltese Queen of Victories Band's book. Mr. Grima became a member of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa. At the end of 1994, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa started preparing to participate in the Youth

¹⁷² Minutes 1994, Meeting 13, 16 th August 1994

¹⁷³ Interview with Alexander Caruana, one of the founders of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru Banda Birżebbuġa A.D. 1990.

¹⁷⁴ Minutes 1994, Meeting 17, 1 st November 1994

¹⁷⁵ Minutes 1994, Meeting 15, 26 th September 1994

¹⁷⁶ Minutes 1994, Meeting 20, 28 th December 1994

¹⁷⁷ Minutes 1995, Meeting 19, 7 th November 1995

¹⁷⁸ Minutes 1995, Meeting 15, 22 nd August 1995

¹⁷⁹ Minutes 1995, Meeting 18, 24 th October 1995

Musicians' Festival¹⁸⁰ The Banda Birżebbuġa participated during the second event and did very well. ¹⁸¹ In 1996, however, the band club couldn't participate due to expenses related to the construction of the new premises. ¹⁸² The band club also had to decline an invitation to participate in the national initiative "Milied Hieni" (Peaceful Christmas) for the 1995 Christmas festivities. ¹⁸³

DECORATING BIRŻEBBUĠA STREET FOR CHRISTMAS

After the Birżebbuġa Local Council expressed the wish with both local band clubs for them to help decorate the locality, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was the only band club that accepted the invitation to decorate for the 1994 Christmas.¹⁸⁴

THE 1995 CENTRAL COMMITTEE

For the fifth year of the Socjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, President Anthony Camilleri retained his position, assisted once again by Emanuel Mangion. Alex Azzopardi was once again appointed as Secretary, assisted by Louis Balzia, Grazio Pullicino was appointed Treasurer assisted by Anthony Vella and Frans Zammit was appointed Director General assisted by Angelo Cutajar as Assistant General Director. The band delegates were Alfred Piscopo and Grazio Pullicino, the representative at the Malta Band Club Association was Emanuel Mangion and Louis Balzia was the Public Relations Officer. 185

A CHANGE IN THE PLACE FOR THE SETTING OFF OF FIREWORKS

The fireworks enthusiasts of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa asked for the aerial fireworks to be set off from the limits of *Borġ in-Nadur*. The permit for this change was granted, and hence from 1995 the aerial fireworks were to start being set off from the limits of *Borġ in-Nadur* such that the people on the parvis get a more enjoyable view. A few weeks later, this permit was revoked with the Central Committee deciding that if this decision was not reversed, the aerial fireworks wouldn't be set off since they couldn't be enjoyed from the main square. The band club asked the Local Council for a meeting on this matter. From its end, the Birżebbuġa Local Council had to correspond with the Planning Authority for the aerial fireworks to be set off a hundred meters away from *Borġ in-Nadur*. The band club's wish resulted in no progress since the Planning Authority reverted by informing the parties that all areas considered part of *Borġ in-Nadur* were classified as Zone A and hence setting off fireworks from these areas was not permissible.

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180 Minutes 1994, Meeting 17, 1 st November 1994
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¹⁸¹ Minutes 1994, Meeting 17, 1 st November 1994

¹⁸² Minutes 1995, Meeting 2, 31 st January 1995

¹⁸³ Minutes 1995, Meeting 17, 3 rd October 1995

¹⁸⁴ Minutes 1994, Meeting 20, 28 th December 1994

¹⁸⁵ Minutes 1995, Meeting 1, 17 th January 1995

¹⁸⁶ Minutes 1995, Meeting 5, 14 th March 1995

¹⁸⁷ Minutes 1995, Meeting 7, 11 th April 1995

¹⁸⁸ Minutes 1995, Meeting 10, 23 rd May 1995

¹⁸⁹ Minutes 1995, Meeting 11, 6 th June 1995

¹⁹⁰ Minutes 1996, Meeting 6, 26 th March 1996

Despite the band club's appeal, the Planning Authority didn't change its stance and hence the aerial fireworks had to be set off from a buffer zone. Therefore, a new zone was identified for this purpose in the *Brolli* area, with this proposal being accepted.¹⁹¹

A CHANGE IN THE PLACE WHERE THE SAINT PETER'S STATUE IS SET UP

The Central Committee for the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa wrote to the Police Inspector such that starting in 1996, given that the band club was going to start operating from its new address in Birżebbuġa Street, the column for the exposition of the statue at the end of the march on Friday be moved to the end of Birżebbuġa Street opposite the Mid Med Bank, today HSBC. At the end of the march ground fireworks were to be set off at Pretty Bay. ¹⁹² In the meantime, the Local Council was planning to permanently move the setting off of the ground fireworks from the parvis to prevent further damage to the same stairs and it suggested, via correspondence, moving the setting off of the fireworks to Pretty Bay. The Central Committee for the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa agreed with this proposal since it was planning on doing exactly that anyways. ¹⁹³

THE CONCERT ON THE DAY AFTER THE FEAST

The Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa also sent a request to the Birżebbuġa Local council to organise a varied concert in the garden at St George's Bay on the day after the titular feast dedicated to Saint Peter. Despite the Local Council's approval of this initiative, the permit application was rejected by the Police.¹⁹⁴

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE BOCCI CLUB

The Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa continued improving its good relations with all the local organisations. The Central Committee sent its congratulations to the local *Boċċi Club* when it won the National Championship. 195

CONCLUSION

Overall, these were some of the days from the first years of Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa A.D.1990, a band club which like a newborn baby had a lot of enthusiasm to execute all its ideas, at moments sprinting, at others gaining experience; initiatives and events which led to the band club becoming very popular not only in Birżebbuġa but also in other localities and abroad, a band club which dominated the celebrative aspect of the feast dedicated to Saint Peter, the very aim which led to its establishment. However, this was just the beginning, and destiny remained written... tal-Iljun, the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, the band club belonging to Birżebbuġa and to Saint Peter had to continue writing its history, some parts in gold calligraphy and others in black.

¹⁹¹ Minutes 1996, Meeting 10, 21 st May 1996

¹⁹² Minutes 1995, Meeting 9, 9 th May 1995

¹⁹³ ibid.

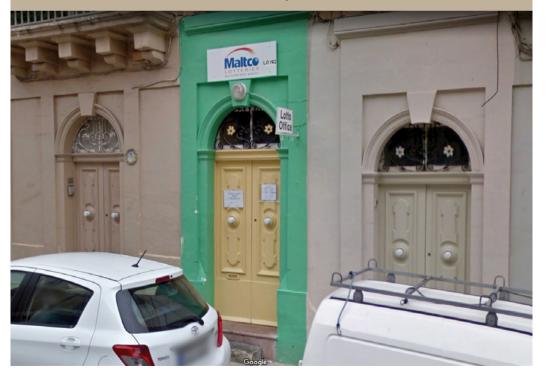
¹⁹⁴ Minutes 1995, Meeting 15, 22 nd August 1995

¹⁹⁵ Minutes 1995, Meeting 16, 5 th September 1995

The Banda Birżebbuġa with its first uniform.



The Lotto Office of the band club in St Philip's Street.



The first uniform and march libretto back in 1990, still cherished in the Band Club.



The premises of the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa in St George's Bay decorated for the titular feaSt



Pupils and Musicians in 1990.

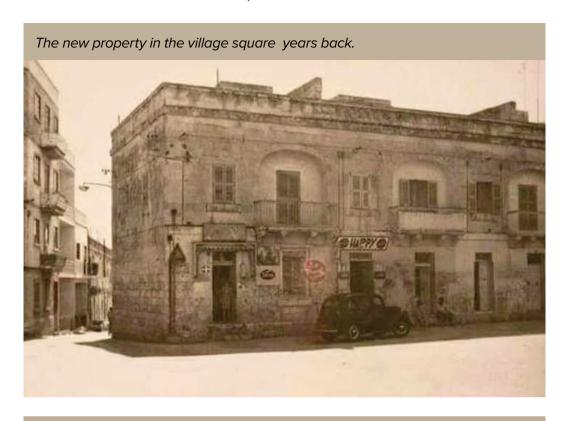


A delegation from the Soċjetà Filarmonika Birżebbuġa attended the funeral of Can. Rikkardu Attard.









Musical Director Michael Bugelli with founders Anthony Camilleri, Alexander Caruana, Joseph Caruana, Jason Vella, Raymond Cutajar and Angelo Cutajar.



The letter sent to Mr. Abdilla about the first meeting.

45, Zebra Street, Birzebbuga. GHAQDA MUZIKALI BIRZEBBUGA. Care off:14 St. Philip Str Birzebbuga. 18/12/89.

Ghaziz Sur M. Abdilla.

Qieghed nibghatlek din 1-ittra qasira f'isem il-kumitat provizorju ta'l-GHAQDA MUZIKALI BIRZEBBUGA biex nirringrazzjawk talli inti gentilment ghagbok taghtina 1-permess biex ahna nkunu nistghu naghmlu 1-ewwel laqgha tal-Kumitat fil-lokal tieghek nhar il-Hamis 14 ta'Dicembru,1989.

Avolja il-laqgha ma saritx fil-lokal tieghek, nirringrazzjawk xorta wahda u nixtiequ lilek u lill-familja tieghek il-Milied u s-Sena t-Tajba.

Inselli ghalik hafna, Dejjem tieghek,

Alex Caruana.

Segretarju Provizorju.

Membership card number 1 in 1990. Belonging to the first President, Anthony Camilleri and signed by the first Treasurer, Jason Vella.





Moments from the General Meeting. Founder and first President Anthony Camilleri, first Treasurer Jason Vella and Mro Michael Bugelli can be seen.



Moments from the first General Meeting. Four of the founding members can be seen; Jason Vella, Angelo Cutajar, Raymond Cutajar and Joseph Caruana.



The Musical Director, his Assistant and the first local musicians.



The blessing of the Banda Birżebbuġa by Parish Priest Fr Ġużepp M. Farrugia on Thursday 2nd of August 1990.



The letter sent to Fr. Alfred Micallef, asking him to be the Spritual Director of the Society.

"Discovery",
Dawret il-qalb Imqaddsa,
Birzebbuga.

GHAQDA MUZIKALI
BIRZEBBUGA.
Care off:14,Triq San Filippu,
Birzebbuga.
18/12/89.

Ghaziz Dun Alfred.

Kif nahseb ga smajt f'Birzebbuga qed tigi mwaqqfa ghaqda muzikali gdida li se jkun jisimha GHAQDA MUZIKALI BIRZEBBUGA..

Fl-ewwel laqqha tal-kumitat provizorju li ghadu kemm kellna l-gimgha l-ohra tkellimna dwar id-direttur Spiritwali ta'l-ghaqda u l-kumitat kollu wera x-xewqa li lilek jaghzlek bhala direttur Spiritwali ta'l-ghaqda taghna. Dan dejjem jekk inti trid u jekk tigi approvat mill-membri ta'l-ghaqda prezenti fl-ewwel laqqha generali li sejra ssir nhar il-Hadd 14 ta'Jannar 1990. Minn dan ta'l-ahhar ma ghandix dubju izda xorta rrid navzak skond l-istatut ta'l-ghaqda li qed isir. Ahna nafu kemm inti mpenjat kemm fil-parroca u anke fil-gzejjer taghna u int taf kemm tassew tista'taghmel gid jekk tkun direttur Spiritwali ta'l-ghaqda taghna.

Ghalhekk int mitlub tinfurmana bil-miktub malajr kemm jista'jkun jekk taccettax jew le biex fil-laqgha generali nkunu nistghu nipproponuk lil membri biex dawn japprovawk.

F'isem il-mitejn membru li ghandna sal-lum fl-ghaqda taghna nselli ghalik hafna u nixtieq lilek u lill-familja tieghek Milied hieni u sena mimlija risq.

Alex Caruana.

iem tieghek.

Segretarju Provizorju.

Fr. Alfred Micallef's reply. RECEIVED 2 3 DEC 1989 57, Sacred Heart Promenede B' Bugia 20/12/89 Is- Segre Vayie Provigorja Clicada Musikali Birgeblique gliajij alex, grappi tropa Vai l'attra tréglishe Val-il Vai Dicembre. Grazzi whole glian- xwoga lil-humital Kieglith were hi whem id - direttur sperituali Val-gliagde Vagtihom, Izda jeddispyacini lispa li ma nistan melter glish banga blial din intrabba f impingi otra hi ghiandi kemme fil - parrocca humm fid - Djocesi B. den haller jelsk ilsollhom byonn va si serviggi religiogi total dran, Konferenzi etc. pien lest li nghinkom bil-pain bolle bif, fil-falt, ga ged naghmel f' hagini e ghagdiel dina andre benna l-parricia, meta ptolhini Wag V hi mesting, litele u lill-membri pollha bull risq a benke mis Sema, mintigellsom illsoll it Melied it - Lapot a Sena Sdida membya gid a huna. Degim tiegtele, Dem Celfred micallel.

The letter sent to the Parish Priest informing him about the priest chosen to be the Spiritual Director.

II-Kappillan, Parrocca San Pietru, Birzebbuga.

> 13, St Andrew's Str, Birzebbuga. 31 ta' Dicembru 1989.

Ghaziz Kappillan,

Kif ga forsi smajt, grupp ta' nies minn Birzebbuga, l-aktar zghazagh, behsibna nwaqqfu Banda gdida. Nixtiequ li kieku, bhal kull banda ohra f'Malta, jkollna Direttur Spiritwali mill-Parrocca. Xtaqna li nitolbu lilek li tinnomina Sacerdot mill-Parrocca biex jkun id-Direttur Spiritwali taghna.

Biex inkunu sinciri mieghek ga konna avvicinajna lil Dun Alfred u lil Dun Charles. Ma Dun Charles il-bierah stqarrejjna li kien missna ktibna lilek biex tinnomina lid-Direttur Spiritwali. Dun Charles qalilna li tkun haga sabiha kieku naghmlu dan u ghadna fil-hin li naghmluh. U dan qed naghmluh issa permezz ta' din l-ittra.

Nitolbuk tiskuzana u taghdirna jekk inqasnik. Ahna nixtiqu li d-Direttur Spiritwali jkun jista' jithabbar lil Laqgha Generali li se issir fil-Lido Hall nhar il-Hadd 14 ta' Jannar.

Niehdu din l-okkazzjoni biex namguram lilek u lil Kleru kollu is-Sena it-Tajba. Nitolbuk tberikna,

Dejjem Tieghek,

Agent Segretarju.

The reply from the Parish Priest dated 2nd of January 1990.

PARROCCA SAN PIETRU

Tel: 871200

DOMUS CURIALIS, CURATE FENECH STREET, BIRZEBBUGA

Date: 2 ta! Jannar 1990.

Sagretarju Provizorju Ghaqda Muzikali Birzebbuga c/o 14 Tr**i**q S Filippu B¹Buga



Ghaziz Alex,

B'riferenza ghall-ittra tæeghek tal-31/12/1989 ghandi ninfurmak li saret laqgha llum tal-presbiterju parrokkjali li fiha giet diskussa t-talba taghkom ghal Direttur Spiritwali. Minhabba l-importanza tal-kas qed nirreferuh lis-Superjuri taghna. Meta jkolli risposta ninfurmawkom.

Taghkom fi Kristu

kappillan



The second reply, with the approval of the Spiritual Director dated 12th of January 1990.

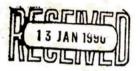
PARROCCA SAN PIETRU

Tel: 871200

DOMUS CURIALIS. CURATE FENECH STREET, BIRZEBBUGA

Date: 12 ta! Jannar 1990

Segretarju Provizorju Ghaqda Muzikali Birzebbuga c/o 14 Triq S Filippu B¹Buga



Ghaziz Alex,

Wara li rriferejna 1-kas lis-Superjuri taghna (kif ktibtlek fl-ittra tieghi tat-2 tat Jannar) ghandi ngharrfek li l-presbiterju jilqat t-talba taghkom. Fl-istess hin nifhmu li l-ghan tat din in-nomina ghandu jkun li jaqdi l-missjoni tal-Knisja li tkun strument tat ghaqda u ftehim u ghalhekk jibqat skop ghal Direttur Spiritwali sakemm dawn l-ghanijiet ikunu jridu jigu milhuqa.

Peress li d-Direttorju tal-Kleru jirriserva din in-nomina ghall-kappillan jew delegat tieghu lest ninnomina Direttur Spiritwali bhala delegat tieghi fl-Ghaqda Muzikali Birzebbuga wara l-approvazzjoni ta' l-istatut li t

Taghkom fi Kristu

kappillan

Sculptor Alfred Camilleri Cauchi during an interview.



Sculptor Alfred Camilleri Cauchi putting the halo on the statue of St Peter.



The statue of Saint Peter on the pedestal.



The first Flag of Honour.



The papier-mâché lion during the morning march.



The band club's instrumentation.



Mgr. Ġużeppi Minuti.



Mro Felicienne Paris.



Mro Simon Farrugia.





Part of the first Financial Statements of the Society.

SOGJSTA PILARMONIKA BIRZEBBUGA A.D. 1990.

RENDIKONT FINANSJARJU MILL- 1 ta' JANMAR sa 31 ta' DICEMBRU 1990.

,			
DHUL		Lm c m	
	dilanc ta' Dicembru 1989. (Prov.)	- 144.00,0	
1	Shubija tal-Membri	661.50,0	
2.	Loghob fil-Kazin	145.50,0	
3.	Attivitajiet Socjali	2014.21,0	
4.	bonassjonijiet	1909.43,0	
5.	Kera tal-Kazin	200.00,0	
6.	Puoblikazzjonijiet	1079.65,0	
7.	Mizata tal-Allievi	26.50,0	
8.	Dhul Muzikali	150.00,0	
1000	Lotterija tal-Gimgha	756.00,0	
	Interessi mill-Bank	3.68,0	
10.		598.87,0	
11.	Strumenti u Materjal Muzikali	719.90,0	
12.	Fieri u Tombla		
13.	Cassette	468.00,0	
14.	Commission ta' Farsons	71.15,0	
15.	Banka tal-Lottu	122.82,0	
16.	Dhul iehor	30.00,0	15
	DHUL TOTALI	9101.21,0	
			-

Moments from the First General Meeting. President Anthony Camilleri addressing those present. Secretary and Founder Alexander Caruana can be seen writing the minutes of the meeting.





One of the permits granted to the Banda Birżebbuġa.

DIPARTIMENT TA' L-ARTIJIET AUBERGE DE BAVIERE IL-BELT



LAND DEPARTMENT AUBERGE DE BAVIERE VALLETTA

Our Ref:

L 343/75

TELEPHONE: 221271

Your Ref:

18 ta' Novembru 1991

Socjeta' Filarmonika B'Bugia 77 Triq B'Bugia B'Bugia

Attn: Mr. Alexander Caruana

Sinjur

B'riferenza ghall-ittra tieghek tal-24 ta' Ottubru 1991 fejn tlabt permess biex il-Banda taghkom taghmel programm fil-gnien li qieghed f'Misrah ir-Repubblika B'Bugia nhar il-Hadd 29 ta' Dicembru bejn id-9.00 u l-11.00 ta' filghodu, ghandi ninfurmak li t-talba tieghek giet milqugha b'mizata ta' Lm. 2 u bil-kundizzjoni li jingieb il-permess tal-pulizija.

Dejjem tieghek

A. Fenech

gh/Kummissarju tal-Artijiet

Reciting the Holy Rosary in the premises.



One of the first marches done by the band club in front of the premises at St George's Bay.



THE LONG, DIFFICULT, EXCITING ROAD TO BECOME OWNERS OF OUR BAND CLUB

he wish of the Committee, the members and all those who had the band club at heart, was that of having its premises (każin). Conscious of the fact that problems and difficulties may arise over the years, the Soċjeta Filarmonika Birżebbuġa planned ahead and started working to invest in a property so that it could operate comfortably from a place of its own. However, although many contributed with donations, it looked like the investment was going to be a hard struggle.¹

Although the road ahead seemed long and difficult, the Committee, supported also by the strong will of members, benefactors, and others who had the band club at heart, decided to continue with this project and less than ten years after its establishment the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru had a property of its own. In 1990, President Anthony Camilleri wrote to Dr Anton Tabone, who used to spend time abroad, asking if he was willing to lease the property to the band club. Initially, the Committee didn't receive a reply. The mentioned property was at 11/12 Birżebbuga Street, the main road which takes you to Pretty Bay from the village core. Many members wanted, from the early days of the establishment of the band club, the band club to not only own its premises but also for the premises to be at the centre of our parish.

President Anthony Camilleri began researching and found that the property was bought by a businessman who was going to demolish it and build apartments instead. The President contacted this entrepreneur, asking him if he was willing to sell the property.

On the 16th of May 1992, a Committee was appointed to take care of the Preliminary Agreement (Konvenju) to buy the property which was to be named "II-Ġawhra ta' San Pietru" in a couple of years. An Extraordinary General Meeting was called on the following Sunday to discuss this important investment with all the members.² Everything was approved, and a date was fixed for the signing of the final contract so that the Socjeta Filarmonika Birżebbuga becomes the owner of its social club. The contract was signed on the 15th of September 1992, exactly on the day the Catholic Church celebrates Our Lady of Sorrows, the first patron saint of Birżebbuga.³ The news spread fast and the members decided to hold a celebratory march from Lido Hall to the new premises. This march was paid for by various benefactors and at the end, Secretary Alexander Caruana, raised on the members' shoulders, attached a poster on the facade of the new band club with the words "Dan ser ikun il-każin il-ġdid tas-Soċjeta Filarmonika Birżebbuġa" (This will be the new social club of the Societa Filarmonika Birżebbuga). The price for this new property was Lm20,000⁴ and the band club had to pay the loan with a monthly instalment of Lm268 to the bank.⁵ For the sake of this project's success, a Commission was appointed so that every action taken was taken with responsibility and meticulously.⁶ Secretary Alexander Caruana headed this Commission.7

The next problem was that the bank asked for collateral to lend the needed amount of money. President Anthony Camilleri and his family talked with the bank and offered the required guarantees. As expected, the enthusiasm of the members was contagious, and a lot of donations were given. The members of the Youth Section offered to do the work needed on the hall of the new premises.⁸

The work began instantly thanks to Secretary Alexander Caruana and to the architect Michael Schembri who took care of the plans for the new property. A meeting for all the members was held on the 27th of September 1992 to approve all the plans such that the work could begin. Sunny Bonnici (ta' Farfar) and Peter Camilleri (il-Pajju), two members of the Soċjeta Filarmonika Birżebbuġa, on the 8th of November 1992, suggested that the premises should be demolished and rebuilt again. The demolition works began in December and on the 27th of March 1993, the construction of the new premises began. Victor Schembri and Pietru Camilleri (is-Sigarr) joined Sunny and Peter and took care of all the construction works of the new premises. 10

- 2 Minutes 1992, Meeting 9, 18 th May 1992
- 3 Minutes 1992, Meeting 17, 9 th September 1992
- 4 Minutes 1992, Meeting 9, 18 th May 1992
- 5 Minutes 1992, Meeting 18, 22 nd September 1992
- 6 Minutes 1992, Meeting 15, 11 th August 1992
- 7 Minutes 1993, Meeting 1, 12 th January 1993
- 8 Minutes 1992, Meeting 16, 25 th August 1992
- 9 Minutes 1992, Meeting 18, 22 th September 1992
- 10 Interview with Alexander Caruana, one of the founders of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru Banda Birżebbuġa A.D. 1990.

In addition to work carried out by Architect Michael Schembri, the band club received the help of Hon. Karmenu Vella who signed the plans for the reconstruction of the new property to be used as premises by the Soċjeta Filarmonika Birżebbuġa.¹¹ The two architects mentioned met on the 25th of April 1993 at the premises of the new band club to make new plans so that the work could continue.¹²

The expenses were immense and so the Soċjeta Filarmonika Birżebbuġa had to be responsible and economise in every sector, including the musical one. Although the teaching of music and the Band remained always the priority, the band club, like a family that was passing through a difficult moment, was not always able to accommodate everyone, mainly in buying new musical instruments.¹³ The expenses and the enthusiasm to complete the construction of the band club resulted in the decision to cancel the Banda Birżebbuga Annual Concert for the 1995 feaSt. Hence the expenses that usually were paid for the rehearsal and the concert were spared.¹⁴ To hold the festive march on the eve of the Titular feast, the expenses had to be collected a month before the date. If this was not the case, the Soċjeta Filarmonika Birżebbuġa had to pay another band club to play.¹⁵ Same thing applied for the marches during the titular feast week, till April 1995; the expenses for all these had to be collected beforehand.¹⁶

The construction of the premises was given a lot of importance and priority, and so in 1993, a few months after the beginning of the construction works, the premises were open for the public between Friday, the third day of Tridum, and Sunday, the day of the titular feaSt After the 1993 feast, the band club began requesting quotations to finish the ground floor's concrete ceiling,¹⁷ This cost Lm2,200 ¹⁸ and the work was carried out at the beginning of December 1993.¹⁹

A REQUEST FROM THE PLANNING AUTHORITY

The Planning Authority sent a letter to the Committee of the Socjeta Filarmonika Birżebbuġa to change the design of the façade of the band club premises so that it resembles the precedent architectural style. Architect Michael Schembri was chosen to modify the plans to comply with the requests of the authority.²⁰ After this change, there was nothing more to be done, but wait for the permits to be issued and complete the construction works on

¹¹ Minutes 1993, Meeting 2, 26 th January 1993

¹² Minutes 1993, Meeting 8, 20 th April 1993

¹³ ibid.

¹⁴ Minutes 1995, Meeting 1, 17 th January 1995

¹⁵ Minutes 1995, Meeting 6, 29 th March 1995

¹⁶ Minutes 1995, Meeting 1, 17 th January 1995

¹⁷ Minutes 1993, Meeting 17, 14 th September 1993

¹⁸ Minutes 1993, Meeting 23, 7 th December 1993

¹⁹ Minutes 1993, Meeting 24, 21 st December 1993

²⁰ Minutes 1993, Meeting 19, 12 th October 1993

the premises, "Ġawhra ta' San Pietru".21

THE WORKS BEGIN

The enthusiasm of the members of the Soċjeta Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was great, to the extent that some of them spent whole days working so that the premises could be ready before expected hence permitting the band club to operate in a more professional and modern way. During the first half of 1994, work was initiated on the electricity supply as well as the stonework on the façade's arch.²² To have everything in order regarding health and security, the volunteers who were working on the construction of the new band club were insured.²³ Towards the end of 1994, the first floor was ready too, with the expense now being Lm1,960. Lm1,300 were borrowed without interest from Honorary President John Polidano. Thanks to a lot of volunteers and benefactors the construction works were continued and the second floor was also ready just before the summer of 1995.^{24 25}

THE FIRST FLAGPOLE

As part of the preparations for the 1995 titular feast, the first flagpole was installed on the roof of the new band club. The architects and the Spiritual Director were invited for the occasion. The blessing of the pole was held on Sunday 28th of May 1994, The Feast of the Ascension of Jesus (*Lapsi*).²⁶ After the 1996 titular feast, the Central Committee decided that this flagpole had to be changed and instead replaced with another one 42 feet long.²⁷

THE MORNING MARCH 1995

Following a suggestion by Vice President Emanuel Mangion, the Central Committee of the Banda Birżebbuga proposed applying for a permit to finish the morning march, that was held on Sunday, in front of the new premises in Birżebbuġa Street.²⁸ A call for offers was also issued so that during the feast week, one could find a bar service *(bottegin)* for members and the general public.²⁹

PERMISSION FROM THE NEIGHBOURS

All the neighbours, except one, approved the opening of the new premises. The neighbour who didn't approve, changed his decision after he was offered a galvanized steel door to mitigate the loud noises that may be created by a band club operating near to one's house.³⁰

- 21 Minutes 1993, Meeting 20, 26 th October 1993
- 22 Minutes 1994, Meeting 7, 19 th April 1994
- 23 Minutes 1994, Meeting 15, 26 th September 1994
- 24 Minutes 1995, Meeting 8, 25 th April 1995
- 25 Minutes 1995, Meeting 11, 6 th June 1995
- 26 Minutes 1995, Meeting 10, 23 rd May 1995
- 27 Minutes 1996, Meeting 16, 3 rd September 1996
- 28 Minutes 1995, Meeting 14, 18 th July 1995
- 29 ibid.
- 30 Minutes 1995, Meeting 18, 24 th October 1995

THE KEYS OF THE OLD BAND CLUB

With the construction works on the new band club nearly completed, towards the end of 1995 and the beginning of 1996, the Soċjeta Filarmonika Birżebbuġa started planning to begin operating from the new address. Since the premises at St George's Bay were no longer required, the keys were returned to the owners.³¹

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE 1996

In the Annual General Meeting of 1996, a Central Committee was appointed. Its role was to execute a smooth transition from the old premises at St George's Bay to the new premises at Birżebbuġa Street. President Anthony Camilleri kept his position, assisted by Emanuel Mangion. Alex Azzopardi remained Secretary General assisted by A. Vella, Grazio Pullicino was the Treasurer assisted by Louis Balzia, while the Director General was Francis Zammit assisted by Angelo and Joe Cutajar. Joseph Caruana was appointed as the band delegate, Peter Camilleri was appointed curator of the premises assisted by Mario Cauchi, Emanuel Zammit was the archivist assisted by Charlie Galea, Louis Balzia was appointed as the Public Relations Officer assisted by Carmelo Caruana, while Emanuel Mangion was the representative of the band club at the Malta Band Clubs Association, assisted by Spiridione Camilleri.³²

CHANGE IN THE NAME

From the beginning, the wish of the members and of others who had the band club at heart was that the Socjeta Filarmonika Birżebbuġa is named after the patron saint, Saint Peter the Apostle. During the Annual General Meeting, the first one held at the new premises, the Central Committee proposed that since the operational address was going to be changed, it was the ideal time to also change the name. On this historic day, exactly six years after the foundation of the band club, the name was changed from Socjeta Filarmonika Birżebbuġa A.D.1990 to Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa A.D.1990.³³

Discussions were held to change also the insignia to reflect the name change, and after the insignia, the band's official flag of honour (*I-istandard*) was also changed.³⁴ This was paid for by the Women's Section.³⁵ After the 1996 feast, there was also the suggestion to change the badges of the band club to reflect the new insignia.³⁶ The badges were ordered from Australia and used for the first time during the 1997 titular feaSt Besides the badges, new ties were also ordered.³⁷ To complete these changes the members of the Central Committee now had also a uniform, consisting of black trousers and a dark green blazer.³⁸

- 31 Minutes 1995, Meeting 22, 9 th January 1996
- 32 Minutes 1996, Meeting 1, 16 th January 1996
- 33 ibid.
- 34 Minutes 1996, Meeting 9, 7 th May 1996
- 35 Minutes 1996, Meeting 9, 7 th May 1996
- 36 Minutes 1996, Meeting 17, 17 th September 1996
- 37 Minutes 1997, Meeting 10, 3 rd June 1997
- 38 Minutes 1997, Meeting 11, 17 th June 1997

THE FEAST OF CATHEDRA PETRI 1996

On the 22nd of February 1996, Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru Banda Birżebbuġa had to organise the march for the feast of Cathedra Petri that had to begin from the square in front of the parish church and end in front of the new premises in Birżebbuga Street.³⁹ The march, held for the first time in Birżebbuga, was a huge success.⁴⁰ It was decided that the march "X'każin għandna tal-Iljun" composed by Musical Director Michael Bugelli was to be the Official Hymn March of our Band Club and be re-named "Inti I-Patrun Tagħna", clearly dedicated to Saint Peter the Apostle, the Patron Saint of the Band Club.⁴¹ The march was chosen because it was very popular with the members and supporters from the day it was written in 1992. The Central Committee informed the Parish Priest about the change in the name of the band club and also about the march that was going to be organised on the 22nd of February 1996.⁴²

A NEW MAIN HALL

On the 17th of February 1996, the main hall of the new premises was used for the first time; the Women's Section organised a Carnival activity.⁴³ Today this main hall is named *Sala Anthony Camilleri*.

THE CONCERT MILL-BANDISTI GHALL-MEMBRI

For the feast of Cathedra Petri, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru Banda Birżebbuġa started organising an annual concert under the direction of our Musical Director Michael Bugelli. The first one was done on the 25th of February 1996 in the main hall of the new premises.⁴⁴ It was highly successful and much appreciated by the members, and hence the concert remained a recurring annual event.

Now that the band club had a large main hall in the premises, a rally for members and supporters started being organised before the feast week.⁴⁵ After the week in which the titular feast is celebrated, thanks to the help of many members, a meeting was held to discuss the activities that were carried out, what went well, what could be improved and discuss future plans.⁴⁶

MARCH FROM ST GEORGE'S BAY TO THE NEW BAND CLUB

On the 24th of March, Banda Birżebbuġa performed a concert at St George's Bay and then marched from the old premises to the new one.⁴⁷

- 39 Minutes 1996, Meeting 1, 16 th January 1996
- 40 Minutes 1996, Meeting 4, 27 th February 1996
- 41 Minutes 1996, Meeting 2, 30 th January 1996
- 42 Minutes 1996, Meeting 3, 13 th February 1996
- 43 Minutes 1996, Meeting 4, 27 th February 1996
- 44 Minutes 1996, Meeting 3, 13 th February 1996
- 45 Minutes 1996, Meeting 11, 4 thJune 1996
- 46 Minutes 1996, Meeting 15, 21 st August 1996
- 47 Minutes 1996, Meeting 2, 30 th January 1996

PROBLEMS FOR THE GROUND PYROTECHNIC DISPLAY

Although the Soċjeta Filarmonika Birżebbuġa was more focused on the construction of the new premises, it also at the same time wanted to follow the aim of giving its contribution to the titular feast's celebrations and preparations. These were not always plain sailing. In February 1996, Parish Priest Ġużepp M. Farrugia informed the Band Club that for that year the church's parvis wasn't to be used for musical concerts and fireworks displays. The Central Committee wrote to the Local Council to apply for a permit so that the fireworks display could be held on the pavement in front of the parish church. The Committee applied also for a permit so that the column with the statue of Saint Peter, property of the band club, was installed at the beginning of Birżebbuga Street. To make the lifting of the statue easier, a ramp had to be constructed before the column was embellished with sculptures, thus avoiding causing damage to the statue when the statue is raised. The permit to install the column in Birżebbuġa Street was accepted. The Local Council also agreed that holes could be drilled in the pavement in the village square for fireworks to be installed there and set off on the eve of the titular feaSt⁵²

MORE INVITATIONS

The Central Committee received an invitation from the Maltese Music Promotion Committee to participate in a concert of music composed by Maltese composers. In the meantime, the Central Committee agreed to lend the new main hall to the Birżebbuga Scouts Group ⁵³ as well as to the *Forum Kaċċaturi, Nassaba u Konservazzjonisti* for their Annual General Meeting.⁵⁴ The Committee of the local Labour Party club invited a representative from the local organisations, including the band club, to participate in a parade that was going to take place every year on the 31st of March, Freedom Day.⁵⁵

NEW LYRICS FOR THE HYMN MARCH

Since Alexander Caruana, in the meantime, had become Secretary of the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen, the Central Committee wanted to change the lyrics that Caruana wrote for the Hymn on the 19th of December 1989. Therefore, Secretary Alex Azzopardi invited the poet Joe Julian Farrugia to write new lyrics for the Hymn of the Banda Birżebbuga as well as for the Hymn March "Int il-Patrun tagħna", both composed by Musical Director Michael Bugelli. Toe Julian Farrugia accepted and the Central Committee approved his

- 48 Minutes 1996, Meeting 3, 13 th February 1996
- 49 Minutes 1996, Meeting 5, 12 th March 1996
- 50 Minutes 1996, Meeting 7, 9 th April 1996
- 51 Minutes 1996, Meeting 11, 4 th June 1996
- 52 Minutes 1996, Meeting 7, 9 th April 1996
- 53 Minutes 1996, Meeting 6, 26 th March 1996
- 54 Minutes 1996, Meeting 12, 24 th June 1996
- 55 Minutes 1996, Meeting 7, 9 th April 1996
- 56 Interview with Alexander Caruana
- 57 Minutes 1996, Meeting 8, 23 rd April 1996

work.58

MORE WORK TO DO

Just like when one acquires a new house, the work never stops, and this was the same situation with the new premises. Although the new premises were being used, new needs and necessities were felt every day. Thirty-five new chairs were bought, and it was decided that stone balustrades were to decorate the balconies.⁵⁹ At the same time, work continued in the kitchen of the main hall so that it could be leased.⁶⁰

NEW POOL TABLE

A new pool table was bought so that the members and all those that frequented the premises could enjoy playing and spend some time of relaxation.⁶¹

CHANGE IN THE PLACE FOR THE FEAST'S MUSICAL CONCERT

After the 1996 feast, the Central Committee, supported by the members, expressed the wish that the concert organised on the eve of the titular feast be done in the square in front of the parish church (*Misraħ il-Knisja*). Therefore the bandstand that used to be lent to the Banda Birżebbuġa from the Banda San Pawl from Ħal Safi, was set up in the village's main square instead of Pretty Bay.⁶² The permits were issued by the Local Council and the bandstand was set up in Misraħ il-Knisja from the following year, 1997.⁶³

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS 1996

This was the first Christmas at the new premises. Hence it was decided that a crib was to be mounted to the facade.⁶⁴ Helped by a good number of volunteers, member Anthony Buhagiar began working on this crib. On the 15th of December 1996, a crib exhibition was inaugurated at the new premises, where a crib that participated also in the National Crib Competition was exhibited.⁶⁵ A children's Christmas party was organised and five children from an orphanage were invited so that they could feel included and have fun with other children.⁶⁶ Besides this initiative, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa felt the need to continue helping the community with other philanthropic initiatives. Donations were given to the Friends of St Vincent de Paule Committee and the Community Chest Fund during the *Milied Flimkien* campaign.⁶⁷ Together with *Aġenzija Sedqa* the administration of

- 58 Minutes 1996, Meeting 13, 9 th July 1996
- 59 ibid.
- 60 Minutes 1996, Meeting 19, 15 th October 1996
- 61 Minutes 1996, Meeting 17, 17 th September 1996
- 62 Minutes 1996, Meeting 18, 1 st October 1996
- 63 Minutes 1997, Meeting 11, 17 th June 1997
- 64 Minutes 1996, Meeting 20, 5 th November 1996
- 65 Minutes 1996, Meeting 22, 3 rd December 1996
- 66 ibid.
- 67 Minutes 1996, Meeting 23, 17 th December 1996

the band club participated in a Papal forum about the prevention of drugs.⁶⁸ In January 1997, after the Christmas festivities, the administration of the Band Club as presented with a certificate for participating in the crib competition.⁶⁹ As a sign of appreciation for his work, Anthony Buhagiar was nominated to become a lifetime member.⁷⁰

THE FRONTISPIECE

Now that the construction project of the new band club, especially externally, was nearly completed, the Central Committee started thinking about how to decorate the building with a spectacular frontispiece. The administration started requesting for quotations. The expenses were Lm1,500 ⁷¹ and it was completed in August 1997. It depicts the liberation of the apostle Peter from prison with the help of the Angel, an episode from the Acts of the Apostles. ⁷² The frontispiece is the work of sculptor Louis Xuereb from Żabbar while the statues were worked by sculptor Aldo Consiglio.

THE 1997 CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Whilst the 1996 Central Committee had the honour and responsibility of shifting the premises and changing the name of the band club, the 1997 Central Committee, with Anthony Camilleri as President, assisted by Emanuel Mangion had the honour and responsibility of completing the construction project and successfully purchasing the new band club.

Secretary General Alex Azzopardi was assisted by Louis Balzia, Grazio Pullicino kept his position as Treasurer assisted by Emanuel Zammit, Joseph Caruana was the band delegate assisted by Freddie Formosa, Carmelo Galea the Archivist, Louis Marsh assisted by Carmelo Caruana was the Curator, Francis Zammit the Director General, assisted by Joe Cutajar, Raymond Cutajar the Delegate for street decorations, Anthony Vella the Director for Sports, Louis Balzia as the Public Relations Officer, Emanuel Ebejer as Director for the Activities, while Carmelo Galea was entrusted with the maintenance of the new premises. As one can see, there was an increase in the size of the committee since now that the band club had its own premises, it was able to organise more activities and take initiatives to attract more members and supporters. As usual, the Commissions were established together with the Editorial Board.

SUNDAY EVENING BAND

The Secretary General wrote a formal request to the Soċjeta Filarmonika Santa Katarina V.M. of Żurrieq to invite the band to play on Sunday, the day of the titular feast for Saint Peter. This had to be done after an agreement was reached between the two band clubs

⁶⁸ Minutes 1996, Meeting 24, 7 th January 1997

⁶⁹ Minutes 1997, Meeting 2, 28 th January 1997

⁷⁰ ibid.

⁷¹ Minutes 1996, Meeting 22, 3 rd December 1996

⁷² Minutes 1997, Meeting 14, 12 th August 1997

⁷³ Minutes 1997, Meeting 1, 14 th January 1997

that from then on they, and not the parish, have to invite an external band club to play on Sunday evening.⁷⁴

BAZAAR ORGANISED BY THE WOMEN'S SECTION

The Women's Section expressed the wish to organise a bazaar in the new premises, an initiative that was very welcomed by the Central Committee, which offered its help so that the activity could be successful. Thanks to such activities and collaborations, the Women's Section continued to help the band club by purchasing new instruments. In fact, during the concert "Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri" on the 23rd of February 1997 a clarinet and set of tubular bells were presented to the band club. This presentation was very important and crucial since the band club's instrumentation was still primitive and the set of tubular bells was very expensive.

THE MAIN FLAGPOLE

Now that the construction works were nearly completed, and the work on the frontispiece had already begun, the administration of the band club decided that for the 1997 feast, a new flagpole was to be acquired, and so it was ordered to be ready by July 1997.⁷⁸ In fact, it was ready on the 12th of April 1997.⁷⁹

THE FEAST OF THE CATHEDRA PETRI 1997

Since the feast of Cathedra Petri, the 22nd of February, occured on a Sunday, the solemn mass was not celebrated as usual. The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa protested with the Parish Priest Ġużepp M. Farrugia by sending him a letter and also informed the Archbishop's Curia.⁸⁰

MORE INVITATIONS

Although the expenses were high, the interest in the band club, not only from the members and supporters from Birżebbuga but also from outside the village, was very encouraging. The band club continued to be invited to perform in various feasts. In 1997, Banda Birżebbuġa was invited by the *Għaqda tal-Pawlini* of Valletta for the Feast of the Shipwreck of St Paul, the Feast of St Anne in Marsascala⁸¹ and the feast of Our Lady of the Holy Doctrine in Tarxien.⁸² The latter service had to be cancelled since the Ecclesiastical authorities didn't issue a permit.⁸³

- 74 ibid.
- 75 Minutes 1997, Meeting 2, 28 th January 1997
- 76 Minutes 1997, Meeting 3, 11 th February 1997
- 77 Minutes 1997, Meeting 4, 26 th February 1997
- 78 ibid.
- 79 Minutes 1997, Meeting 7, 8 th April 1997
- 80 Minutes 1997, Meeting 4, 26 th February 1997
- 81 Minutes 1997, Meeting 3, 11 th February 1997
- 82 Minutes 1997, Meeting 6, 25 th March 1997
- 83 Minutes 1997, Meeting 11, 17 th June 1997

THE MAIN HALL

Due to its capacity, resources and comfort, the main hall of the new premises was requested for use by many organisations, both from Birżebbuga and other localities. To mention a few, it was used by the pressure group for the \dot{Z} ona tal-Papa in Birżebbuġa and by the Christian Mission group. To keep memories alive, the marble name plate that was used when the band club was at St George's Bay, now that it had new premises, was mounted near the staircase of the new premises.

THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY

On the 19th of March, the Spiritual Director of the band club, Fr. Charles Carabott celebrated the Silver Jubilee of his priestly ordination. In April, the band club was invited to a Holy Mass and a reception to commemorate this occasion.⁸⁶

FINALISING THE PAYMENTS

The 16th of September 1997 was a very special and memorable day for the band club. On this day the last payment to the bank was paid and so now the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa became the exclusive owner of the new premises. The Central Committee, from months before the date, had been thinking about what activities were going to be organised to commemorate this unforgettable and historic event. A video about the various phases of construction of the new premises was prepared.⁸⁷ A marble plaque was also ordered to remember this important day.⁸⁸

On the 2nd of August 1997, on the eve of the titular feast of St Peter Apostle, President Anthony Camilleri symbolically laid the last stone of the new premises. The morning after, before the march, the President raised the Maltese flag for the first time on the new flagpole of the premises.⁸⁹

The Central Committee, with the help of the members and supporters, started planning a week of activities, with the pinnacle being reached on the 16th of September 1997. On that day, a Holy Mass was celebrated, which was supposed to be celebrated by Archbishop Gużeppi Mercieca, however, he was not able to attend. Other activities were also organised including horse races and a beach party organised by the Youth Section. On the 16th of September, Birżebbuga teemed with green and yellow flags and in the evening a Holy Mass was celebrated by the Spiritual Director, Fr. Charles Carabott, in the band club's main hall. The administration of the band club, members of the various sections and a lot

⁸⁴ Minutes 1997, Meeting 6, 25 th March 1997

⁸⁵ Minutes 1997, Meeting 7, 8 th April 1997

⁸⁶ Minutes 1997, Meeting 6, 25 th March 1997

⁸⁷ Minutes 1997, Meeting 7, 8 th April 1997

⁸⁸ Minutes 1997, Meeting 10, 3 rd June 1997

⁸⁹ Memorji tal-Awtur

⁹⁰ Minutes 1997, Meeting 14, 12 th August 1997

of supporters were present for this Mass. The new premises of the band club, which now were owned by the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa since the bank loan had been paid, was consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and The Immaculate Heart of Mary. ⁹¹ To conclude these celebrations, the Banda Birżebbuġa, accompanied by all its flags of honour performed a march around the street of Birżebbuġa. ⁹²

ISSUES REGARDING THE FIREWORKS

Another issue regarding the fireworks was raised. The band club protested with the Parish Priest since the latter decided to reduce the money given to the two clubs so that they could produce pyrotechnics. The Central Committee felt that this was not fair since the band club produced more fireworks than the other club. So there was the suggestion that the pyrotechnic displays should be done every other year by the two clubs. The Parish Priest liked the idea ⁹³ and the issue was solved. Hence for the 1997 titular feast, only the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen took care of the fireworks.⁹⁴

THE HISTORY OF THE BAND CLUB IS PUBLISHED

Secretary Alex Azzopardi presented a biography of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa in the second volume of *Pubblikazzjoni Indipendenza*, about the nation's band clubs. 95 During the 1997 summer, the band club, with all the musicians raised and taught at our club, was invited to perform a concert of festive marches at the water polo pitch. 96

FORUM ABOUT THE RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa participated in a Forum about the relations between other organisations and groups in Birżebbuga. Thanks to this forum, many important points and issues were raised and this helped to help in the relationship between various local groups.⁹⁷ The band club became part of a directory of artists and cultural organisations, the Creative Malta Directory.⁹⁸

A NEW TEACHER FOR MUSIC THEORY

Mro Felicienne Paris resigned as Assistant Musical Director and teacher of music theory at the Banda Birżebbuġa. Her students started being taught by Musical Director Mro Michael Bugelli. 99 During the General Meeting that was held on the 26 of October 1997 amendments

- 91 Minutes 1997, Meeting 15, 26 th August 1997
- 92 Minutes 1997, Meeting 15, 26 th August 1997
- 93 Minutes 1997, Meeting 9, 20 th May 1997
- 94 Minutes 1997, Meeting 11, 17 th June 1997
- 95 Minutes 1997, Meeting 13, 15 th July 1997
- 96 ibid.
- 97 Minutes 1997, Meeting 15, 26 th August 1997
- 98 Minutes 1997, Meeting 16, 23 rd September 1997
- 99 Minutes 1997, Meeting 17, 7 th October 1997

to the statute were discussed ¹⁰⁰ and Mro Paris was proposed, with the members accepting, as Honorary Musical Director. ¹⁰¹ Local musician Stephanie Barbara was appointed as the new teacher for musical theory, under the supervision of the Musical Director. ¹⁰²

CONCLUSION

A young band club had managed to make history. It was determined from the start, and although some lost hope and got discouraged, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was strong enough to overcome the difficulties it had to face. Now it had its premises and had changed the name of the band club to include the patron saint of Birżebbuġa, the apostle St Peter. Enriched by the two changes, and with the help of the members, benefactors, supporters and volunteers, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa could continue to sow and reap success everywhere it participates.

¹⁰¹ Minutes 1997, Meeting 17, 7 th October 1997

¹⁰² Minutes 1997, Meeting 18, 21 st October 1997

The letter sent to Dr Anton Tabone. The first tentative to buy the premises in Birżebbuġa Street.

Ghaqda Muzikali Birzebbuga.A.D.1990. c/o 35 Triq Sant'Andrija, Birzebbuga. 7 ta'Jannar 1990.

Chaziz Dr. Anton Tabone,

Jiena Ninu Camilleri (ta'Baskal ta'nies biex inwaqqfu banda u jiena 1-President taghhom. Jiena cempilt lis-Sur Nazju Licari u dan gie jurini 1-post li ghandek fi triq Birzebbuga fuq 1-ispizerija.ghax dan huwa post idejali hafna ghalina biex fih nkunu nistghu naghmlu skola tal-Muzika biex nghallmu lit-tfal.Ahna jekk jista' jkun nixtiequ li inti tikrihulna,u ahna lestuili nhallsu kera ta' nirrangaw.

Is-Sur Nazju Licari qalli li inti qed titlob is-somma ta'Lm17,000 li ghalina kif tista'tobsor hija somma li qatt ma nistghu naslu li nhallsuha. Inti taf li ahna m'ahniex F'pozizzjoni li nehorgu Lm17,000 ghax ahna ghadna nibdew u barra minhekk il-post fih spiza kbira ta'il-fuq minn Lm5,000 biex tidhol fih. ghax il-post huwa abbandunat totalment. Ahna jekk inti ma taccettax li tikrihulna lesti li nhallsu s-somma ta'Lm10,000, li minnhom naghtik Lm4,000 quddiem u s-Lm6.000 l-ohra naghtuhomlok bil-Lm100 fix-xahar u b'hekk nigu nhallsuh f'hames snin.

Nispera'li luti tifhem il-pozizzjoni taghna ghax ahna ma ahna ser naghmlu 1-ebda negozju izda sor naghmlu skola tal-Muzika biex fiha nkunu nistghu nghallmu lit-tfal ta' Eirgebbuga 1-muzika.

Fåisem il-Kumitat nibghat nselli ghalik hafna, hixtieqlek kull gid u kull success u nitelbok tinfurmani bil-miktub malajr kemm jista jkun.

Dejjem tieghok,

Ninu Camilleri.

The letter sent to Nazio Licari on the 7th of January 1990.

Mr.Nazio Licari, 37,St.Fracis Street, Cospicua. Ghaqda Muzikali
Birzebbuga.
c /o Nr.Ninu Camilleri
35,sT.Andwew Street,
Birzebbuga.
Tel.No.828508/9
7 ta'Jannar.1990.

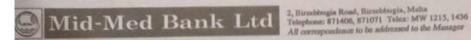
Ghaziz Sur Licari.

Qieghed niktiblek din 1-ittra biex biha ninfurmak li 1-offerta taghna ghall-post ta'Triq Birzebbuga huwa kif ghandek miktub fl-ittra 1-ohra li baghtnilek ma'din 1-ittra.Nirringrazzjawk tal-pacenzja li hadt bina u nitolbok tibghat 1-ittra 1-ohra lis-Sur Anton Tabone malajr kemm jista'jkun.Nitolbuk biex malli jkollok xi informazzjoni, jekk joghogbok tghaddihielna malajr kemm jista'jkun.

Dejjem tieghek,

N. Camilleri.

The Bank Loan Contract.



17 June 1992

Is-Segretarju Socjeta' Filarmonika Birzebbugia AD 1990 77 Triq Birzebbugia Birzebbugia BBG 05

Ghaziz Sinjur

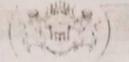
B'referenza ghall-ittra taghkom ta' 1-1 ta' Gunju 1992, il-Bank qieghed jikkonsidra favorevolment li javanza lilkom is-somma mitluba kif diga' miftiehem mal-President, is-Sur Camilleri, u naturalment skond in-normi tal-Bank.

Ikun tajjeb li wiehed jinnota li, billi bhala garanzija qed jigu offruti sommom ta' flus depozitati f'isem individwi (membri tal-kumitat) is-self isir f'isimhom proprju kollettivament.

Dejjem tieghek

Mo Alfred Spiteri Manager

Correspondence with the Bank.



SOČJETÁ FILARMONIKA BIRŽEBBUĆA A.D.1990

27, Triq Birleblings, Biržebbuga Malta

13 ta' Lulju 1992.

Mid Ned Bank Lil Nanager, 2, Triq Birzebbuga, Birzebbuga.

Sinjur.

Ahna li hawn taht iffirmajna bhala President, Segretarju u Kaxxier tas-Socjeta' Filarmonika Birzebbuga, qeghdin nitolbuk li taghmlilna cekk (draft) fuq l-ismijiet ta' Oliver Cachia u Alfred Briffa mill-account binnumru ta' A/C No. 474076199 ta' l-istess socjeta'.

Niringrazzjawk bil-quddiem.

Bis-somma ta Lm2500.00. Maltin.

Dejjem Tieghek

PRESIDENT
A. CAMILLERI

SEGRETARJU A.CARUANA KAXXIER G. PULLICINO

Correspondence with the Bank.

KILLA BUNKAROMIKA BUKABBUKA (10,1000

the state of the s

14 ta Settembru 1992

The Manager, Mid-Med Bank Ltd. 2 Birzebbuga Road, Birzebbuga.

Sinjur,

Ahna li hawn taht iffirmajna bhala president u kaxxier tas Socjeta Filarmonika Birzebbuga nitolbuk biex jekk ghogbok tamel cheque (Draft) mill kont ta 1-istess socjeta li in-numru tal kont 474076199 fuq 1-ismiet ta Mr.Olivier Cachia w Alfred Briffa bis somma ta Lm2000.00., Nitolbok ukoll biex jekk ghogbok tamel cheque (Draft) iehor fug 1-isem ta Dr.Patrick Critien, LL.D. bis-Somma ta Lm640.00.

Grazzi Hafna, Dejjem tieghek.

President. Anthony Camilleri. Kaxxier. Grazio Pullicino. The guarantee Anthony Camilleri made on behalf of his family, that permitted the issuance of the loan to buy the new premises.



 Biezzhbugia Rouf, Birzebbugia, Malia Telephone: 471406, 871071. Talefax: 688001. Telex: MW 1215, 1436. All correspondence to be addressed to the Manager.

14th September 1992

Mr. Anthony Camilleri 35 Triq Sant'Andrea Birzebbugia BBg 04.

Dear Sir.

We are pleased to advise that the Bank has placed at your disposal the following facility for a period of 5 years for reviewing by the 14th September 1997 subject to the following terms and conditions:-

Loan Lm13,000 (Thirteen thousand Maltese Lir1).

Interest For the time being debit interest will be charged at the rate of 8% per annum on daily debit balances in accordance with recognised banking facilities. This rate of interest will remain effective irrespective of the terms of the facility until notice is given by the Bank of an amended

rate.

Repayment @ Lm268 per month inclusive of interest within 5 years of

drawdown.

Purpose End finance to purchase club premises situated at 11/12

B'Bugia Road, B'Bugia re Socjeta Filarmonika B'Bugia AD1990.

Security Mid-Med Bank Ltd, B'Bugia - Savings A/C No. 474082857 for

Lm6000 in the name of Mr. Anthony Camilleri.

Mid-Med Bank Ltd, B'Bugia - Fixed Deposit A/C No. 085201 for Lm3000 in the name of Mr. Carmelo Camilleri.

Mid-Med Bank Ltd, B'Bugia - Savings A/C No. 474069982 for Lm600 in the name of Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Mercieca.

Mid-Med Bank Ltd, B'Bugia - Fixed Deposit A/C No. 064923 for Lm400 in the name of Mr. Raymond Mercieca & Mrs. S. Mercieca.

Mid-Med Bank Ltd, B'Bugia - Fixed Deposit A/C No. 019953 and 21964 for Lm1000 each in the name of Mr. Joseph Camilleri.

Mid-Med Bank Ltd, B'Bugia - Fixed Deposit A/C No. 096074 for Lm500 in the name of Mr. & Mrs. A. Camilleri.

Bank Of Valletta, Valletta - Foreign Currency Savings A/C No. 17708179019 for STG£998.06 in the name of Mr. & Mrs. A.

Camilleri.





The delegation of the Society led by President Anthony Camilleri signing the contract.



Part of the contract to buy the new premises.

Illum it-tlieta, thejn u gnowrin ta' Novembru tas-sena elf disa' mija erbgha u disghin (22.11.1994)

Quddiemi, Nutar Dottor Joe Cilia Duttur tal-ligi, dehru personalment, wara li vverifikajt l-identita' tal-partijiet minn dokumenti ufficjali, hawn taht indikati:-

Minn naha l-wahda:

Carmen sive Lilian Busuttil, mart Charles, bint ilmejtin Victor Borg u Carmela nee Farrugia, imwielda z-Zejtun
u residenti "Il-Kappara", numru sitta u tmenin (86), Triq il-Port
Ruman, Kavallerizza Home Ownership Scheme, Marsaxlokk
(Karta tal-identita' numru 230845(m)) li qed tidher fuq dana
l-att ghan-nom u in rappresentanza ta' Ursola Farrugia, xebba,
bint il-mejtin Joseph u Rosina nee Paris, imwielda Bormla u
residenti "Pax et Bonum", Triq Cassar, il-Mosta (Karta talidentita' numru 308823(m));

- aktar l-isfel imsejha il-"venditrici nomine".

Minn naha l-ohra:

Anthony Camilleri, President, bin il-mejjet Pasquale u Francesca nee Abdilla, imwieled u residenti Birzebbugia; Alexander Azzopardi, Segretarju, bin Emanuel u Josephine nee Abela, imwieled il-Pieta' u residenti Birzebbugia; u Grazio Pullicino, Tezorier, bin il-mejjet Luigi u Paola nee Scicluna, imwieled Haz-Zabbar u residenti Birzebbugia (Karti tal-identita' numri 1058546(m), 241570(m), u 238633(m) rispettivament), li fil-kwalitajiet taghhom premessi qed jidhru fuq dana l-att ghan-nom u in rappresentanza tas-"Socjeta' Filarmonika Birzebbugia A.D. 1990"

- aktar l-isfel imsejhin il-"kumpraturi nomine".

U bis-sahha ta' dana l-att il-komparenti venditrici nomine qed tbiegh, tittrasferixxi u tassenja lill-komparenti kumpraturi nomine li qed jaccettaw, jixtru u jakkwistaw ilfond konsistenti fkamra wahda, li ggib in-numru erbatax (14) gia numru disgha u sebghin (79), Triq Birzebbugia, Birzebbugia, liema fond fil-prezent jinsab mikri lill-terzi persuni bil-kera ta' hmistax il-liri maltin fis-sena (Lm15 pa), mill-

Att Nru.

BEJGH

Ins.16688/1994 6.12.1994

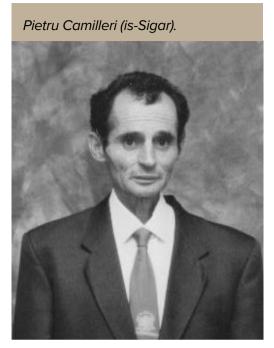
Vol. F. Nru. 18056/1994



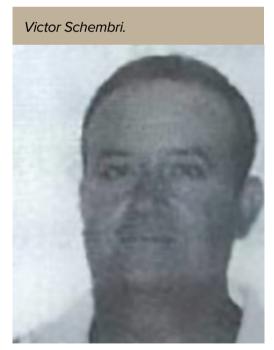










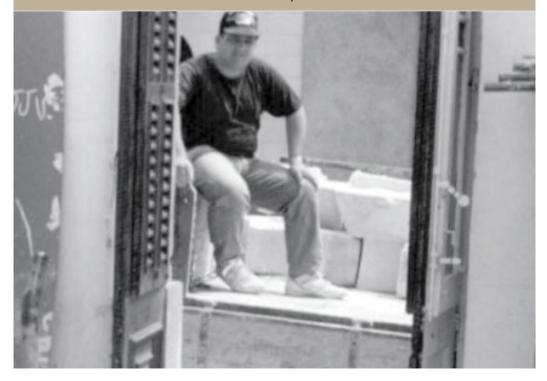




Signing the contract for the new premises.



Moments from the construction of the new premises.



Another phase of the construction works.

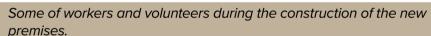


A phase from the construction of the Main Hall.



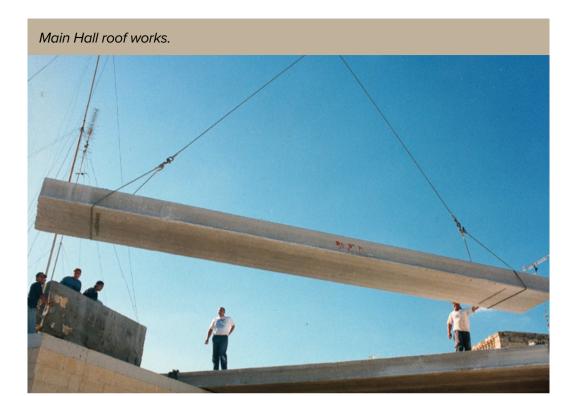
The plaque that was attached outside the house of Dr. Tabone, where today there is the premises.

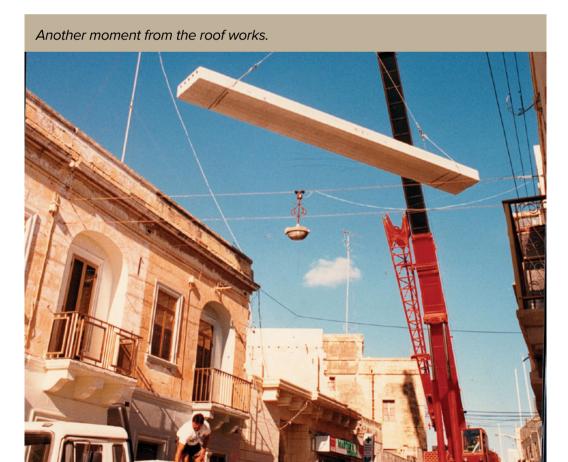














TOWARDS THE THIRD MILLENNIUM, THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIRST TEN YEARS, THE GREAT HYMN

part from the huge contribution given to the external celebrations of the feast of Saint Peter, the patron saint of Birżebbuga, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, wished to contribute also to the celebrations of the greatest feast for Christianity, Easter Sunday. A concert of funeral marches by the Banda Birżebbuga and an exhibition about the Holy Week were already being organised. Conscious of the fact that only one village, Żejtun, from the nearby villages, celebrated Easter Sunday, the members were very excited that the band club was keen to organise such a celebration. However this meant a lot of work, and it was not always accepted and appreciated.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It was decided that the Annual General Meeting was not to be held anymore in January anymore but in October or November instead. This was done so that the Committee, together with the various sections, members and supporters would have enough time to be prepared and work for the festive season.¹

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE 1998

The Central Committee that started the road for the feast of the Risen Christ to be celebrated in Birżebbuġa was composed of President Anthony Camilleri assisted by Emanuel Mangion, Secretary Stefan Zammit assisted by Alex Azzopardi, Treasurer Grazio Pullicino assisted by Anthony Vellam, Director General Angelo Cutajar assisted by Francis Zammit and Louis

¹ Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (1998); Annual Pubblication for the Titular Feast of St Peter, Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru Banda Birżebbuga

Balzia as the Public Relations Officer. Anthony Camilleri and Alex Azzopardi were also the band delegates while Louis March, assisted by Joe Cutajar, was the curator of the band club, Emanuel Mangion remained the representative at the Malta Band Clubs Association, Raymond Cutajar was responsible for the street decorations, Emanuel Zammit was the archivist, while Carmelo Galea, Freddie Formosa and Pietru Camilleri were members.²

PROBLEMS WITH THE GROUND FIREWORKS

The band club continued working towards its goals although a big expense was on the way. However, the problems never stopped. This time it was once again about the ground fireworks display. The Local Council did not accept the proposal to drill more holes in the street and so the ground fireworks had to be mounted on the church's parvis. The Local Council contacted the Parish Priest about this issue.³

COMPUTER COURSES

The Committee received a suggestion to start offering computer courses in collaboration with the company Budget System. On the 14th of February 1998, for the occasion of the feast of Cathedra Petri, the concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-membri* was held.⁴ An excursion was also organised in March.⁵

A NEW DRUM KIT

There was the need for a new drum kit so that it could be used by both students and musicians. This expense was financed by the Women's Section.⁶

EASTER DINNER DANCE

To increase the enthusiasm for the Easter festivities, besides a Christmas Dinner Dance in December, from the year 1998 an Easter Dinner Dance started being organised during the Easter period.⁷

RAISING FUNDS FOR THE STATUE OF THE RISEN CHRIST (L-IRXOXT)

Various members began collecting funds to finance the statue of the Risen ChriSt⁸ During the Annual General Meeting, it was discussed whether the demonstration was to be held in the morning or the evening of Easter Sunday. The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru suggested that it should be held in the evening since in the morning it would be more difficult to find musicians to perform as most of them were already committed to other band clubs. Another reason was the fact that in Żejtun, the demonstration was done in

² Minutes 1998, Meeting 1, 28 th October 1997

³ Minutes 1998, Meeting 2, 18 th November 1997

⁴ Minutes 1998, Meeting 3, 2 nd December 1997

⁵ Minutes 1998, Meeting 3, 2 nd December 1997

⁶ Minutes 1998, Meeting 5, 6 th January 1998

⁷ ibid

⁸ Minutes 1998, Meeting 14, 28 th April 1998

the morning, and therefore Birżebbuga would be the only village doing the manifestation on Easter Sunday in the evening.⁹ At the same time, the statue of Saint Peter needed restoration and sculptor Alfred Camilleri Cauchi was contacted for this work.¹⁰

WORKS AT THE BAND CLUB PREMISES

The work at the premises continued. The Committee's meeting room and the bar had new gypsum ceilings installed, with the latter being paid for by the barman. The main hall was lent to the *St Peter's Football Club* so that they could organise various rallies. It was also decided that for the 1998 Christmas festivities, the crib was to be set up in the Concert Hall ¹¹

THE OLD COLUMN

Since a new column for the statue of St Peter had been made, the Committee decided that the old column was to be given to the Feast Committee so that it could still be used to decorate the streets for the titular feaSt A plaque showing that it was donated by the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was attached to the old column.¹² In the meantime, Joe Cutajar continued the work on the new column for the statue of Saint Peter.¹³

INVITATIONS FOR BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA

More invitations were received by our band to play in other localities. The Għaqda tal-Pawlini, once again invited Banda Birżebbuġa to perform during the march commemorating the Shipwreck of St Paul in Valletta. Banda Birżebbuga played also during the feasts of St Anne in Marsascala and Our Lady of the Holy Doctrine in Tarxien. The Philarmonic Society of Banda San Gabriel from Balzan invited Banda Birzebbuga to perform on the 7th of July 1998, ¹⁴ and also performed during the feast of St Gregory the Great at Sliema. ¹⁵

FESTIVE MARCHES RECORDING

In 1998 Banda Birżebbuga, for the fifth time, recorded the festive marches.¹⁶ This was done on Monday 18th of May 1998 at Boffa Studios.¹⁷

MEETINGS WITH GHAQDA MUZIKALI SAN PIETRU FIL-KTAJJEN

On the 26th of February 1998 a meeting between the representatives of the Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen and St

- 9 Minutes 1998, Meeting 26, 22 nd October 1998
- 10 Minutes 1998, Meeting 14, 28 th April 1998
- 11 Minutes 1998, Meeting 6, 20 th January 1998
- 12 Minutes 1998, Meeting 7, 3 rd February 1998
- 13 Minutes 1998, Meeting 12, 2 nd April 1998
- 14 Minutes 1998, Meeting 8, 17 th February 1998
- 15 Minutes 1998, Meeting 17, 9 th June 1998
- 16 Minutes 1998, Meeting 16, 26 th May 1998
- 17 Minutes 1998, Meeting 16, 26 th May 1998

Peter's Football Club. The latter club was doing very well and had a good chance of being promoted. So it was agreed that the two band clubs would play together for the first time if the football club achieved the promotion. St Peter's Football Club succeeded in being promoted and on Sunday the 17th of May 1998 the two band clubs played together as agreed.¹⁸

As a sign of goodwill, both committees felt the need that discussions between the two band clubs were not to stop after this event. Therefore there were discussions on various issues to improve the organisation of the titular feast, and so more respect is shown and the feast is celebrated in a harmonic atmosphere, especially during the feast week in Birżebbuga. There were agreements on the publishing of a manifesto, one for every band club, that each band club will perform the march on the third day of Tridum every alternate year, and that the two band clubs will play together, Venetian style, on the eve of the titular feaSt. It was also agreed that both band clubs will not continue to pass in front of each other during the festive marches, apart during the morning march.

The Central Committee of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa made it clear that we were ready to sign the agreement once the Central Committee of the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen revoked the sanctions against President Anthony Camilleri so that he once again can enter the social club of Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen when invited. If the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen was not going to revoke this sanction, the agreement was not going to be finalised. The Committee of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa offered that the meeting is held at the premises of the same band club.¹⁹ The same committee wanted the discussions to continue, but asked for the presence of Police and a representative from the Parish Presbytery, and that the ban given to members of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa from the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen be removed .²⁰ The Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen accepted that the ban be suspended until the discussions were being held.²¹

Since the celebrations for the titular feast of 1998 were near, the Police and the Parish Church began thinking that the agreement was not going to be reached. Police Commissioner George Grech was notified and he sent for the two band clubs to inform them that for the feast of 1998, everything should remain as before.²² The legal consultant for the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, Dr Bernard Grech proposed that as soon as the 1998 feast was over, the discussions were to continue immediately so that in 1999 an agreement could be reached which was beneficial for everyone.²³

¹⁸ Minutes 1998, Meeting 16, 26 th May 1998

¹⁹ Minutes 1998, Meeting 9, 3 rd March 1998

²⁰ Minutes 1998, Meeting 10, 10 th March 1998

²¹ Minutes 1998, Meeting 18, 23 rd June 1998

²² Interview with President Alexander Caruana

²³ Minutes 1998, Meeting 20, 12 th July 1998

The only thing that changed for the feast of 1998, mainly since it was asked for by the Ecclesiastical Authorities, was that now the day of the demonstration with the statue of St Peter was alternated. ²⁴ So for the feast of 1998 the Banda Birżebbuga had to organise the demonstration on the Third Day of Tridum, while the year after this was to be done on the Second Day of Tridum and vice-versa. ²⁵

The agreement was signed and started from the titular feast of 1999. This was possible since the officials of the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen promised that they would be doing their utmost so that the ban on the President of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa Anthony Camilleri was removed if they saw signs of goodwill from the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa.²⁶

Unfortunately, during the Monday march, there was an argument due to a lack of understanding between the supporters of the two band clubs. Since the agreement was for the year 1999, the march of the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen, given the permits necessary by the Police, still passed in front of the premises of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, as it used to do till 1998. After this misunderstanding, the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen sent a legal letter so that the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru pays the Lm200 overtime payment for the musicians since their service exceeded the agreed time.²⁷ The lawyer for the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa replied.²⁸ However, the issues were clarified and cleared up with maturity from both band clubs, and the discussions for the titular feast in 1999 continued. It was also agreed that the musical concerts on the eve of the titular feast were to be done alternatively. So from 1999, Banda Birżebbuga was to do the concert first, then in the year 2000 when the band club was celebrating its tenth anniversary, according to the agreement, it was to perform after the other band club.²⁹

TU ES PETRUS HYMN

For the bond with the apostle Saint Peter to continue to be a strong one even within the musical and literary archives of our Philarmonic Society, the 1998 Committee wanted to commission an *Inno di Gloria*, or as it is known among those passionate about feasts, The Great Hymn (*L-Innu Kbir*). Poet Joe Julian Farrugia was contacted to write the lyrics. He accepted and gifted his work to the Band Club.³⁰ The chosen composer for *Tu Es Petrus*, the name of the hymn, was Ray Sciberras, and he was paid the sum of Lm250.³¹

- 24 Interview with President Alexander Caruana
- 25 As the author remembers it
- 26 Interview with President Alexander Caruana
- 27 Minutes 1998, Meeting 23, 15 th September 1998
- 28 Minutes 1998, Meeting 24, 29 th September 1998
- 29 Interview with President Alexander Caruana
- 30 Minutes 1998, Meeting 24, 29 th September 1998
- 31 Minutes 1998, Meeting 16, 26 th May 1998

THE ST GEORGE'S BAY ROUNDABOUT DECORATIONS

It was decided that starting from the 1998 feast the St George's Bay roundabout was to be decorated with five flagposts, and flags about St Peter and Birżebbuga were to be raised. One of the flags was to be the one with the coat of arms of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, as one of the entities organising the titular feaSt³²

IN NEED OF A GARAGE

Although the band club was operating from its own premises, there was the need to have a garage to store materials that were not needed regularly.³³ When the 1998 feast was over, the preparations began so that in the year 2000, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa could celebrate its first ten years since its establishment.³⁴

CONCLUSION

Though a lot of work had been done, trouble was brewing and the year 1999 saw the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa being shaken and hurt by the events that happened, But the truth is that even when threatened, although it takes time, our band club always emerges victorious.

³² Minutes 1998, Meeting 19, 6 th July 1998

³³ Minutes 1998, Meeting 24, 29 th September 1998

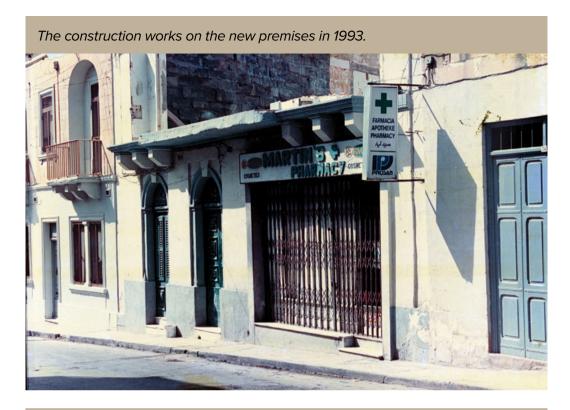
³⁴ Minutes 1998, Meeting 25, 13 th October 1998

The Vocal and Instrumental Concert at the University of Malta in 2000.

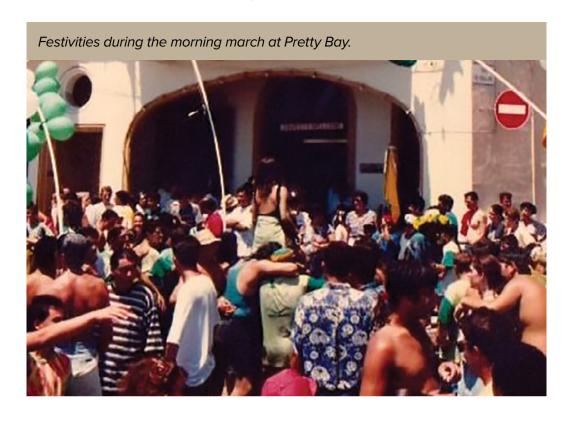


The 1993 feast programme. For the first time in Birżebbuġa a week of celebrations was organised by our band club.









The pedestal and the statue platform (bradella) for the statue of St Peter, property of the band club.



The pedestal for the statue of St Peter, property of the band blub.



Works on the pedestal and the 'bradella'.



Demonstration with the statue of St Peter property of the band blub during the titural feast week.







A detail from the 'bradella'.



Banda Birżebbuġa during the feast of the Immaculate Conception in Bengħijsa in 1990.



Treasurer Grazio Pullicino.



The footballers who played on behalf of the band club.



Works on the crib by Anthony Buhagiar.



The Spiritual Director blessing the crib exhibition.



President Anthony Camilleri accompanied by Joseph Caruana presenting a memento to Anthony Buhagiar in appreciation for his work on cribs along the years.



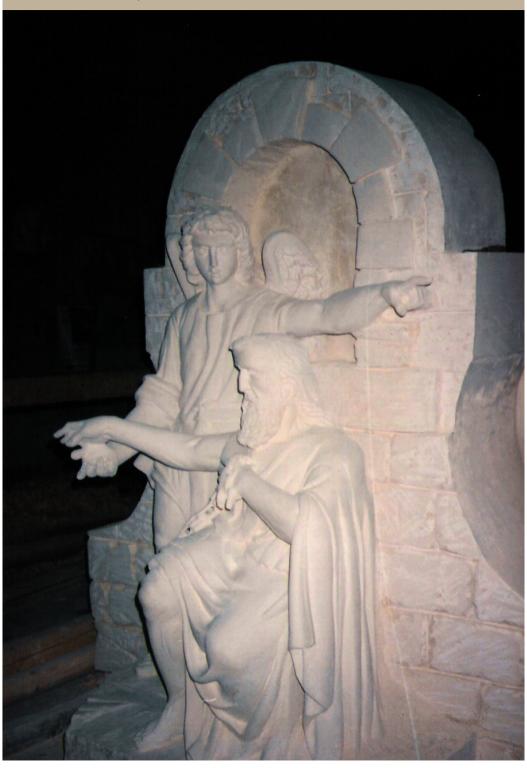
Works on the crib.

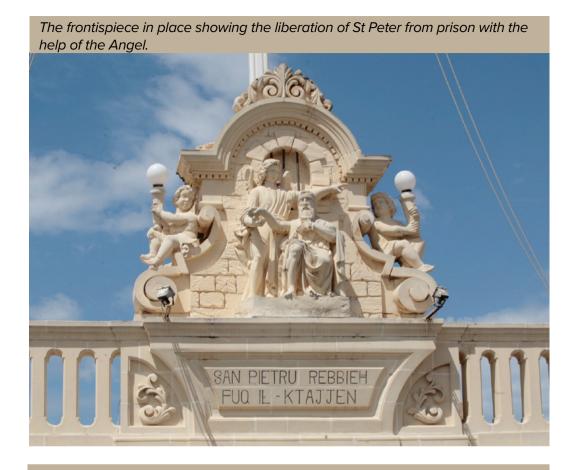


Works on the frontispiece.



Works on the frontispiece.





The Coat of Arms updated with the new name.



The first concert Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri



Socjeta' Filarmonika San Bietru Birzebbuga A.D.1990 ghandha l-pjacir tipprezenta il-Programm Muzikali

'Mill-Bandisti ghall-Membri'

taht it-tmexxija tasSurmast Direttur
Mro. Michael Bugelli
fis-Sala tal'Gawhra ta' San Nietru',
illum il-Hadd, 25 ta'Frar, 1996,
fis-7.00pm.

The marble plaque commemorating the historic date of the 16th of September 1997.



One of the concerts by the Banda Birżebbuġa in the Main Hall.



Mario Sant and Steven Farrugia who helped the Band Club with their theatrical productions.

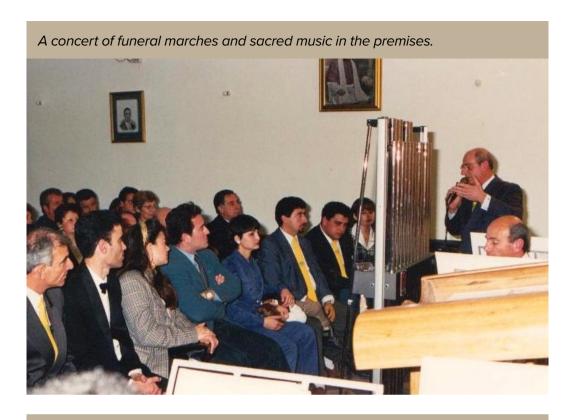






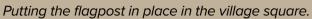
Mro Charles Wallace Suda.





Presentation of the trophies for a pool competition when the band club premises were still at St George's Bay.







One of the first Holy Week Exhibitions



One of the discos organised by the Youth Section.



One of the General Meetings held at the new premises. The representative are wearing the green tie, the official colour of the band club.



During a Christmas social activity organised by the band club.



During one of the concerts on the eve of the titular feaSt



A social activity for the members.



A social activity for children.



6

THE STATUE OF THE RISEN CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

he Second Millenniun was nearly over and the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 was approaching. Motivated to continue having bigger and better Easter celebrations in Birżebbuga, members of the band club suggested that a statue of the Risen Christ was to be made and this led to an Easter community celebration in Birżebbuga. From its foundation, the band club did not want to limit itself to only one feast but wanted to be a band club that helps the spread of culture in Birżebbuġa. However, this led to strong opposition against the band club, not from the people of Birżebbuġa, but from the Ecclestiatic authorities.

PARISH PROCESSION

Some months before the 1998 Easter, relatives of those who in the nearby future were going to be the donators of the statue of the Risen Christ to the band club, offered the Parish Priest of that time, Fr. Ġużepp M. Farrugia, to pay for the statue themselves and gift it to the parish church, so that Birżebbuġa could celebrate Easter as a community. But the parish priest categorically refused, since according to him, the Ecclesiastic authorities would never permit such a thing. This shows that the first wish of the people of Birżebbuġa was for the statue of the Risen Christ to be the property of the Parish Church. Disappointed by the reaction of the Parish Priest, but conscious of the fact that in other localities some band clubs had decided to have a statue of their own when faced with similar problems, these relatives thought of doing the same. Since they were supporters of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, they decided that if the statue was to be made, it was to be the property of the band club.

THE FIRST DEVELOPMENTS

On the 28th of April 1998 Alfred Formosa, Anthony Vella, Anthony Camilleri, Angelo Cutajar and Ray Cutajar, all members of the Central Committee, took the initiative and proposed to the Committee the idea of having a statue of the Risen ChriSt Their wish was accepted with great joy. A week later, on the 5th of May, the Commission commissioned this artwork to Alfred Camilleri Cauchi. The expense for the statue was Lm800 ¹ besides other expenses like the platform (bradella), niche and other necessities. The plan of the Commission was for the new statue to be ready and gifted to the band blub for the 1999 Easter, on the 4th of April. At that time Joseph Caruana (it-Two) was the newly elected Executive Secretary. President Anthony Camilleri informed him of this commissioned artwork and that the statue was going to be paid for by these benefactors and gifted to the band club. Joseph Caruana monitored the works on the statue and regularly visited sculptor Chevalier Alfred Camilleri Cauchi, who had already done work for the band club on the statue of Saint Peter in 1990 and 1991.

A NEW PLATFORM (BRADELLA) FOR THE STATUE

The platform that was used for the statue of Saint Peter needed to be changed. Treasurer Grezzju Pullicino, who was also a carpenter, advised that the new bradella was to be made from walnut wood, despite this type of wood being a bit heavy. The Central Committee accepted his suggestion. Architect Michael Schembri ² designed it and the work was done by Ġużeppi Galea from Luqa. It was decided that this new platform was to be used for both statues, Saint Peter and The Risen ChriSt Later on, the Committee was informed that it was not going to be ready for Easter, but it would be ready for the feast of Saint Peter of the year 1999.

MORE PROBLEMS

Lent 1999 was near. The Parish Church was informed that the band club was commissioning a statue of the Risen Christ and intended to do a manifestation with it. One day, treasurer Grazio Pullicino told Secretary Joseph Caruana that Parish Priest Ġużepp M. Farrugia informed him that the Ecclesiastic Authorities were not happy with the manifestation and that if this happened, there would be problems. President Anthony Camilleri was urgently contacted by the Central Committee. The Parish Priest wrote a letter to the Curia informing them about what the Treasurer had told him.³ However, it was not his decision nor was he responsible for starting all the trouble.

There was a never-ending meeting, during which the morale of the band club, for the first time in nine years, hit rock bottom. Since the band club was not directly involved in commissioning the statue, as this was being done by the supporters, the President asked the Secretary if a Commission could be appointed to buy the statue. The Secretary's response was negative since he understood what the President

¹ Minutes 1999, Meeting 2, 10 th November 1998

² Minutes 1999, Meeting 1, 27 th October 1998

³ Minutes 1999, Meeting 9, 2 nd February 1999

was seeking. Theoretically, he was correct, although many knew that most of the donations were received from committee members and that in a few days the statue was going to be property of the band club. After lots of discussions, it was decided that the Secretary, the Treasurer and the lawyer Dr Bernard Grech were to meet the Ecclesiastical authorities to find a solution.

UNSUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

A lot of meetings were held with representatives of the Church, especially with Fr. Anton Portelli, and many suggestions and ideas were shared but the Church did not change its position.⁴ Besides the fact that they did not want more statues, it also felt that it was indecent that for a statue of Jesus Christ to pass near a bay where many people would be swimming 'half naked'.

When they realised that discussions were going to be inconclusive, the Secretary and the Treasurer informed the Central Committee of the proceedings so that a decision could be taken. The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was between a rock and a hard place. A statue had been commissioned, and it was nearly ready, but at the same time, the Church was seriously warning the band club, something the Ecclesiastical authorities had never done before. The members of the Central Committee had a choice; either stop the dream and keep the statue of the Risen Christ in a niche forever or else go against the decision of the Ecclesiastical authorities and do the manifestation with the statue as many people, especially those from Birżebbuġa, wanted.

The Committee unanimously decided that the preparations were to continue and that the statue of the Risen Christ was to be used at least once.⁵ The Committee did not want to make a bad impression since many had donated money for the statue and were waiting eagerly for the manifestation.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

The Central Committee suggested that this first manifestation took the form of a live pageant with the presence of Roman soldiers and Biblical characters. Waltzes and other music were going to be borrowed from other band clubs with whom it had a good relationship. However, since the Ecclesiastical authorities were against this event and there were serious threats against the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, many took a step back and refused to help and participate. There were also rumours that those who were going to help were going to be the next target for the Church. The Ecclesiastic authorities issued a decree to stop the foundation of new band clubs in localities where a band club already existed and against band clubs having new statues of the Risen ChriSt

MORE OBSTACLES

Since the Central Committee decided that the demonstration was to proceed as planned,

⁴ Minutes 1999, Meeting 10, 16 th February 1999

⁵ Minutes 1999, Meeting 13, 24 th March 1999

the Secretary-General requested the necessary permits from the Police. First, he requested permission from the Local Council. At first, they hesitated,⁶ but after proof was given that as a band there was no need for permission from the Church, the Local Council issued the permits. Thanks to lawyer Dr Bernard Grech, the band club was sure that everything was being done in line with the law. He worked a lot, pro bono, so that finally this event could be held.

After obtaining the permissions needed by the Local Council, the Police permit still had not been issued. This was supposed to be provided by the Żejtun Police office, but after some days the band blub was informed that there were problems with issuing the permit. Following advice by lawyer Bernard Grech, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa filed a legal recourse against the civil authorities since they were violating a fundamental human right.⁷

After some days, the Assistant Commissioner asked the Executive Secretary on call to go to the Żejtun Police Station and pay for the permits to do the manifestation with the statue of the Risen ChriSt Secretary Joseph Caruana informed the Central Committee and Dr Bernard Grech of the fact. The latter advised him to call the Police General Headquarters to verify if the news was real. The Secretary called and replied, smiling, that it was all true. The news travelled faSt Since it was Holy Week, it was really difficult to find musicians and form a band. However, filled with enthusiasm and determination, Secretary Joseph Caruana managed to form a band.

EASTER 1999

Easter Sunday, on the 4th of April 1999 arrived. Lots of people from all over Malta came to Birżebbuġa to see the statue of the Risen Christ for the first time. One of the local English newspapers published a photo of the statue and wrote an article that continued adding fuel to the fire. The Committee wanted the manifestation to be free from too much festivity. In fact, a devoted and decent demonstration was held that evening.

The statue was brought covered in front of the premises 'Ġawhra San Pietru' in Birżebbuġa Street.⁸ A short ceremony was held during which the statue was gifted to the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa. Secretary Joseph Caruana says that:

"From the band club's balcony, one could see a thick crowd filling the street in front of the premises, like there used to be for the titular feast celebrations. As the statue was uncovered, a loud cheerful applause rose from the crowd. When I reminisce, I still can hear the sound and recall the enthusiasm of that moment."

It was a great memorable event, but not easy. The people of Birżebbuġa were delighted that they now had a statue of the Risen ChriSt After the ceremony, a march was held around the

⁶ Minutes 1999, Meeting 10, 16 th February 1999

⁷ Minutes 1999, Meeting 12, 16 th March 1999

⁸ As the author remembers it

streets of Birżebbuġa. Fresh flowers were thrown from the premises' balcony, some of which were kept and framed and still can be seen at the premises. Apart from the flowers, there is also a letter sent by an English couple that was on holiday in Malta and who really enjoyed the atmosphere on that Easter Sunday of 1999.

The manifestation with the statue of the Risen Christ was done and those that were present will remember and mention that event for a long time. An event that left a feeling of happiness in the hearts and minds of members and supporters and gave them hope for the coming years. However, more trouble was brewing

SERIOUS BIG PROBLEMS

The happiness of Easter Sunday did not last long. Two days later Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa received a letter from the Archbishop's Curia. It said that since the band club went against the instructions given by the Ecclesiastic authorities, the Banda Birżebbuġa was now no longer permitted to participate in the feast of Saint Peter and any other feast organised by the Maltese Church.⁹ The band club had no reason to exist any more. The decision shook the band club. The members now were angry with the Church and some decided not to attend mass anymore and not to help and participate in processions and religious functions. Others were angry with the Central Committee since it decided to continue with the preparations for Easter Sunday even though the Ecclesiastic authorities were against it.

After a Committee meeting, Secretary Joseph Caruana and Treasurer Grezzju Pullicino were given the delicate assignment to meet with the Ecclesiastic authorities and find a solution. Immediately they went to talk to Fr Evan Caruana, the Parish Priest of Gudja, who had been an assistant Parish Priest in Birżebbuga for some time and gained the respect of many members. They asked him to help them by being a middleman. Fr. Evan advised them to talk to Fr. Anton Portelli and apologise.¹⁰ Joseph Caruana says that:

"We asked him for help and I think he did his job well. Some days later me and Grazio met Fr. Anton and we asked him to reach an agreement. Initially, it appeared very difficult, but thank God we managed to find a solution. He asked us to apologise and to issue a statement saying that the statue of the Risen Christ would never go out of our premises again. The Church insisted that this statement had to be published also in all local newspapers. I felt humiliated and I wish you could understand my position on that day. I had to act responsibly to save the band club. However, all this was a dagger in my heart."

THE YEARS PASS

The wish of the members and supporters remained that of doing the Easter Sunday

⁹ Minutes 1999, Meeting 15, 20 th April 1999

¹⁰ Minutes 1999, Meeting 17, 13 th May 1999

manifestation with the statue again. During the 2004 administrative year, the Central Committee discussed if there was the possibility of taking out the statue of the Risen Christ, putting it on a column and performing a concert during the Holy Week. The Central Committee contacted the Chancellor of the Archbishop's Curia to check if this was possible. Jason Vella was President of the band club at the time, and there was a tentative to discuss again when Archbishop Cremona visited the premises in 2006. But the Ecclesiastic authorities stuck to their point of view. Many members began losing hope.

Each year the statue was mounted in the main hall or in the Remissa or near the main door. The decorations were eye-catching and beautiful with lots of flowers and angels surrounding the statue, ¹² with all the work carried out with devotion and skill by members of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa. Nevertheless, the wish of the people of Birżebbuga had not been fulfilled yet.

Some days after Alexander Caruana became the new President of the band club, on Sunday 30th of March 2014, Secretary Henry Bonnici informed him that member Ronnie Galea wanted to talk to him personally. The President says:

"Honestly, I never thought that he wanted to talk about the Risen ChriSt At first, I was scared because I thought there was something I was not aware of and now that I had become President I had to be held responsible"

Ronnie talked with the President about his wish that the Church issues permission to hold the manifestation with the statue of the Risen ChriSt Alexander Caruana, as newly elected President, states that after the meeting he said to himself: "Is it possible that from all the difficulties, this is the one which concerns the supporters the most?!"

President Alexander Caruana from that day understood what the statue of the Risen Christ really meant, for Ronnie and for a lot of members and supporters of the band club. Ronnie was one of those who collected donations in the years 1998 and 1999. Ronnie told Alexander these words:

"Alex, in you I see the person that is capable, thanks to your contacts with persons of the Church, of finding a solution such that the people of Birżebbuġa can once again celebrate Easter Sunday with the statue of the Risen ChriSt"

President Alexander Caruana says that Ronnie suggested opening the discussions again with the Ecclesiastic authorities, and if necessary, they could even invite the other local band club to perform as one band. After this meeting, the Central Committee requested a meeting with Can. Anton Galea Scannura, but the Parish Priest stated that the authorities

¹¹ Minutes 2004, Meeting 6, 5 th January 2004

¹² As the author remembers it

had not accepted the requeSt The members kept on putting pressure on the Central Committee to work to find a solution. The committee contacted the Parish Priest again and offered to gift the statue of the Risen Christ to the Parish of Birżebbuġa so that it was kept at the parish church and for the manifestation on Easter Sunday to be accompanied by a mass band formed from musicians of both local band clubs. The Parish Priest asked the President to write all this in a letter so that he could ask permission from the Ecclesiastic Authorities. However, once again, they did not accept. The Parish Priest told the President that if they wanted to gift the statue to the parish, this could be done. But the people of Birżebbuġa did not want this, they wanted the manifestation along the streets with the statue.

On the 31st of March 2016, an event was organised by the Malta Band Clubs Association near the monument of Christ the King in Floriana. For this activity, attendance was very low. Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna spoke to the Secretary and the Treasurer who attended as representatives of the Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa. The Archbishop told them that he was aware of their wish and encouraged them not to lose hope.

A VICTORY FOR BIRŻEBBUĠA

Another year passed, during which the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa worked on the ambitious reconstruction project of the new part of its premises. The Central Committee and the volunteers of the band club had a lot on their hands at the time. Who would have told them that the statue of the Risen Christ would be going along the street of Birżebbuġa accompanied by the Banda Birżebbuġa that year?!

The unexpected happened. When Easter 2017 was near, there were rumours that the Siġġiewi Festival Brass Band was going to commission a statue of the Risen Christ and hold a demonstration with it in the streets of Siġġiewi accompanied by its band. This news started a lot of discussion at the band club, and although this fact was not determinant for it to hold the demonstration on Easter Sunday, many members saw a ray of hope. Representatives of Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa immediately talked to the Parish Priest, Can. Anton Galea Scannura, who sent the delegation to talk to the Ecclesiastic authorities. This was on Palm Sunday 2017 in the morning.

President Alexander Caruana says that on that day Secretary Henry Bonnici told him: "What happens if they tell us that we can do the manifestation with the statue? Since time is against us and we have lots of expenses?" Alexander replied: "I will definitely not say no. I want to see the people of Birżebbuġa happy, as they have been waiting too long for this."

On Monday 10th, Secretary Henry Bonnici contacted Rev. Frans Abdilla, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy and the Parishes in Malta, who replied with a historic and memorable message. Rev. Abdilla said that the Church has no objection against a yearly demonstration with the statue of the Risen Christ in Birżebbuġa.

A poster was published on Monday evening by the Public Relations Officer and the Band Commission started working to form a band for Easter Sunday. In the meantime, the Secretary applied for the necessary permits from the Police. Later that evening, an urgent extraordinary meeting was held by the Central Committee where members approved unanimously that a demonstration with the statue of the Risen Christ could be held, accompanied by the Banda Birżebbuġa. It was agreed that the statue was to go out from the door in Misraħ il-Knisja.

On Tuesday morning, a lot of members and supporters of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa raised a flag. In the evening Banda Birżebbuġa performed its traditional concert of funeral marches and sacred music in the old parish church of Our Lady of Sorrows. President Alexander Caruana informed the sizeable audience in front of the chapel that on Easter Sunday the statue of the Risen Christ of Birżebbuga was going to be used in a manifestation along the streets of Birżebbuga. The preparation works continued and a new libretto was printed with marches and waltzes for the occasion.

EASTER SUNDAY 16TH OF APRIL 2017

On the 16th of April 2017, Easter Sunday, at about 5:30 pm, people started flocking into the square in front of the parish church, exactly in front of the new premises of the band club, and also in the street in front of the 'Ġawhra ta' San Pietru'. Many of them were people from Birżebbuġa who had been part of this historic dream since 1999. They couldn't believe what was happening. This time more people came, in comparison to 1999, because this time there was no fear!

After playing the Hymn march 'Int il-Patrun Tagħna' to salute Saint Peter, the march began from in front the premises and proceeded to the village square. President Alexander Caruana together with Secretary Henry Bonnici and Treasurer Walter Pace appeared on the balcony to begin the ceremony, similar to that in 1999. Anthony Camilleri, Founder, President Emeritus ad Vitam, and main benefactor who represented those who had given the first donations for the statue, since some of them had already passed to eternal life, was also on the balcony. The President thanked everyone for their presence and called for the statue of the Risen Christ to be taken out. The crowd burst into applause, showing a sign of gratitude towards the band club, who had suffered an injustice for a long time, and at the same time as a sign of fulfilment now that their dream came true.

Ex-President Anthony Camilleri delivered a short speech and presented a sum of money as a donation to cover the expenses of the musical service. Besides this donation, there were others, most of them anonymous individuals, who gifted new music to be inserted in the libretto of waltzes and marches.

After going along various streets in the old part of Birżebbuga, the demonstration arrived at Pretty Bay. The band continued to march forward whilst the statue of the Risen Christ

kept a distance. When the way was cleared, surprisingly, the statue-bearers sprinted with the statue of the Risen Christ, a traditional way to celebrate Easter Sunday.

When the march arrived in front of the Band Club's premises, the statue was turned to face the premises, and fireworks were fired. The demonstration ended in the village square with the hymn *Christus Vincit* being played when the statue was taken back into the premises. The Local Council took the opportunity to distribute, especially to the children, various *figolli*, a traditional Easter speciality. Many were those who opted to pay a small donation and take a photo with the statue, while others started to decorate their house's windows and balconies for Easter time.¹³

CONCLUSION

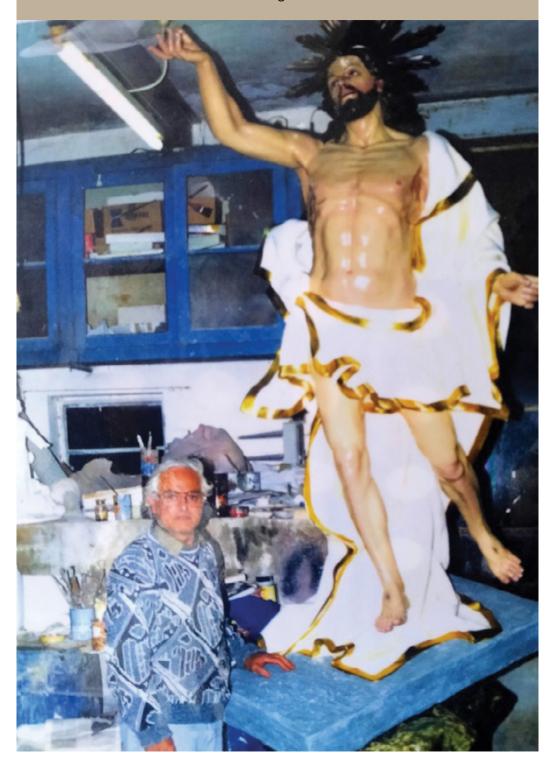
The manifestation with the statue of the Risen Christ was held again in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Unfortunately, like many other mass activities, the demonstration was cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic in the years 2020 and 2021. But when this is all over and everything returns to normality, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa will organise this celebration again to thank God almighty and also to spread culture in our village of Birżebbuga.

Without forgetting the injustice suffered for a long number of years since the band club was not permitted to hold the demonstration, the band club always looked ahead and although it was not its fault that the people of Birżebbuġa were denied the demonstration with the statue of the Risen Christ for eighteen years, now it was its responsibility for the celebrations to continue and become better each year as the people of Birżebbuġa deserve the beSt

¹³ If not stated otherwise, the information was taken from the annual publication by Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, Minn Qalb I-Iljuni, titular feast 2017, an article written by Josef Schembri, Alexander Caruana and Joseph Caruana.



Chevalier Alfred Camilleri Cauchi working on the statue of the Risen ChriSt



A detail from the statue of the Risen ChriSt











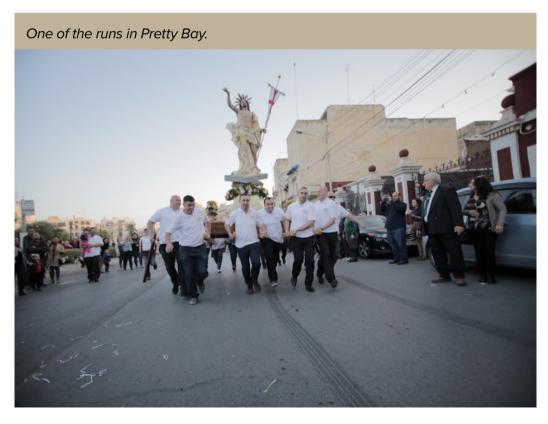
The statue bearers running with the statue in Birżebbuġa Street to bring the statue in front the premises to the joy of those present.





During the demonstration with the statue of the Risen Christ on the 4th of April 1999.





The run towards the village square.



During the demonstration with the statue of the Risen Christ in 2017.





President Alexander Caruana placing the victory flag in the hands of the statue of the Risen ChriSt







The statue of the Risen Christ in 2018



The statue of Risen Christ, with the Flag of Honour of the band club, at the start of the demonstration along the streets of Birżebbuġa







THE THIRD MILLENNIUM: CELEBRATIONS AND CHANGES

he year 2000 was the year that the entire world had been waiting and preparing for. The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, besides the start of the new millennium and the Great Jubilee as launched by Pope Saint John Paul II, was to celebrate the end of the first decade from its establishment. Hence, despite the planning having been started beforehand, 1999 was the year during which the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was busy preparing for the nearing anniversary.

THE 1999 CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The 1999 Central Committee was led once again by President Anthony Camilleri assisted by Freddie Formosa. During this year, a new Secretary General was appointed, Joseph Caruana, who was one of the band club's founders back in 1990. Caruana was assisted by Alex Azzopardi. Grazio Pullicino kept his role as Treasurer and was assisted by Leli Zammit and Ronnie Galea. Louis Balzia was appointed as Public Relations Officer, Alex Azzopardi and Cliff Macelli were appointed band delegates, Louis Marsh was appointed as Curator, Frans Zammit as Director General, Emanuel Mangion and Freddie Formosa as the band club's representatives at the Malta Band Club Association, Cliff Macelli as Archivist, Simon Micallef as Director for Sports, Stefan Zammit as representative for the Youth Section, Anthony Camilleri as representative for the Fireworks Section whilst Dione Camilleri and Arist Azzopardi were appointed as members.¹

THE WORK CONTINUES

The new Committee started working immediately on plans for activities for Christmastime and Holy Week, including a demonstration with a statue of the Risen Christ which was to be held for the first time. For the first time in Birżebbuġa, funeral marches were recorded² on cassette at Boffa in Paola.³ At the time, the band club also started asking for quotes for the stairs' granite which cost Lm3,750 ⁴ as well as its railing.⁵

SETTING UP OF THE CRIB

A large static crib was made under Anthony Buhagiar's leadership, and it was exhibited at the band club's premises. The crib also participated in the National Crib Competition⁶ where it ranked second.⁷ The crib was also given a prominent feature on national television.⁸ The Banda Birżebbuġa also participated in an activity for the elderly in Birżebbuġa during the Christmas festivities.⁹

PHILANTHROPIC MARATHON

The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was going to organise a fundraising marathon for the Eden Foundation between the 14th and 16th of May 1999. Despite being faced with the issue regarding the statue of the Risen Christ as analysed in another chapter in this book, the band club still proceeded with its activities, and in February it organised the annual concert Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri amongst other activities, such as horse races, wine and pizza, an outing to the Fiera l-Kbira, beach party, Lejla Maltija and Green Party.

NICHE FOR SAINT PETER

The Central Committee felt that the statue dedicated to Saint Peter was to be devotedly kept at the band club's premises, and hence it started planning for a niche to be made in the main hall for the statue to be kept in it throughout the year. A decorative barrier was to also be manufactured to be placed around Saint Peter's statue's column when this is set up during the titular feast's week at Pretty Bay. This work was to be done by Pawlu Axiaq at no coSt¹⁵

- 2 ibid.
- 3 As the author remembers it
- 4 Minutes 1999, Meeting 2, 10 th November 1998
- 5 Minutes 1999, Meeting 14, 8 th April 1999
- 6 Minutes 1999, Meeting 2, 10 th November 1998
- 7 Minutes 1999, Meeting 8, 21 st January 1999
- 8 Minutes 1999, Meeting 7, 5 th January 1999
- 9 Minutes 1999, Meeting 6, 22 nd December 1998
- 10 Minutes 1999, Meeting 11, 2 nd MMarch 1999
- 11 Minutes 1999, Meeting 2, 10 th November 1998
- 12 Minutes 1999, Meeting 11, 2 nd March 1999
- 13 Minutes 1999, Meeting 20, 22 ndJune 1999
- 14 Minutes 1999, Meeting 15, 20 th April 1999
- 15 Minutes 1999, Meeting 24, 10 th August 1999

THEATRICAL PRODUCTION ABOUT SAINT PETER

A theatrical production about Saint Peter was also planned to be held during the year 2000. The script was written by Mario Sant and it was originally set to be acted out on the 19th of February 2000 at the Birżebbuġa Primary School's main hall. However, Mario Sant informed the Central Committee that he was unable to continue working on the production. Hence a new script was written by Emanuel Francalanza, named 'Inti Pietru' ('You are Peter') and this was produced by the Youth Section, which during that year was named Sezzjoni Żgħażagħ Iljuni, in the Birżebbuġa Primary School's yard on the 28th and 29 of July 2000.

THE DECADE ANNIVERSARIES ON THE PREMISES' FACADE

As the year 2000 approached, it was decided to decorate the façade with lit-up representations of the years 1990 and 2000 to commemorate a decade from the establishment of the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa. 19

Hence, the 1999 administrative year came to an end and subsequently, the 2000 administrative year was started. The band club had been awaiting this year to celebrate Christianity's second millennium with the rest of the world as well as to celebrate a decade from its establishment.

THE 2000 CENTRAL COMMITTEE

A new Central Committee was elected during the Annual General Meeting, led by new incoming President Simon Micallef who was assisted by Freddie Formosa. The Secretary Joseph Caruana kept his role and was assisted by Alex Azzopardi and Stefan Zammit. Treasurer Grazio Pullicino was assisted by Emanuel Mangion and Anthony Vella. Louis Balzia was the Public Relations Officer and the Curator Ronnie Galea was assisted by Marco Vella. Ronnie Galea was appointed Director General whilst Alfrida Formosa was made Director for the Hall, Angelo and Raymond Cutajar were the Directors for the Premises, Emanuel Mangion was the representative at the Malta Band Club Association, Anthony Vella was the representative for the Fireworks Section as well as the Women's Section, whilst Alfrida Formosa was the representative for the Youth Section. Alex Azzopardi and Freddie Formosa were the band delegates whilst Cliff Macelli and Aronne Micallef served as Archivists. Marco Vella was appointed Director for Sports.²⁰

CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP

At the end of 1999, during the General Meeting, the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa registered its first change in leadership, when Simon Micallef ran for the role

¹⁶ Minutes 1999, Meeting 20, 22 nd June 1999

¹⁷ Minutes 1999, Meeting 25, 24 th August 1999

¹⁸ Minutes 2000, Meeting 16, 9 th May 2000

¹⁹ Minutes 1999, Meeting 24, 10 th August 1999

²⁰ Minutes 2000, Meeting 1, 2 nd November 1999

of President and replaced Anthony Camilleri who felt that it was time to make space for new leadership. In recognition of his work, Anthony Camilleri was appointed Honorary President ad Vitam, Founder and Principal Benefactor of the band club. During the year Secretary Joseph Caruana also felt that he should resign from his role and Stefan Zammit was appointed in his place.²¹

CHANGE IN THE PARISH LEADERSHIP

At the start of December 1999, it was announced that Parish Priest Fr. Ġużepp M. Farrugia was going to end his service as Parish Priest in Birżebbuġa. The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa attended the Parish Priest's last mass on Sunday morning, on the Lord's Epiphany, 2nd of January 2000 and was also present at the reception held for the occasion. Parish Priest Farrugia was appointed Archpriest of the Collegiate Church, today, Saint Paul's Basilica, in Rabat.²²

A CONCERT TO COMMEMORATE A DECADE FROM THE BAND CLUB'S ESTABLISHMENT

Apart from a thanksgiving mass on the 14th of January 2000, exactly the day on which the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was established, a concert was held at the University of Malta's Sir Temi Zammit Theatre for the occasion of a decade since the band club's establishment. The Republic's President, Professor Guido Demarco as well as the Archbishop, Mgr. Ġużeppi Mercieca were invited.²³ Neither attended because of obligations elsewhere. The concert was presented by Charles Arrigo²⁴ and during the concert the Banda Birżebbuġa, directed by Musical Director Michael Bugelli, exhibited challenging music. The concert culminated with the premiere of the Inno di Gloria 'Tv Es Petrvs', with lyrics by poet Joe Julian Farrugia and music composed by Mro Ray Sciberras.²⁵

APPOINTMENT OF A NEW PARISH PRIEST

The parish dedicated to Saint Peter Apostle had no Parish Priest, and its administration was handed to Fr. Alfred Micallef who served as Parish Administrator. Around mid-January, it was announced that Fr. Ġużepp M. Farrugia's successor was to be Fr. Nikol Pace, who was going to end his service at the parish dedicated to Saint Paul in Hal Safi. The preparations for the feast were started immediately from the start of the new Parish Priest's pastoral service. Parish Priest Pace immediately expressed his disposition that the relationship between the two local band clubs continued to improve and hence he initiated a series of meetings with representatives from both band clubs. He wanted both band clubs to perform together in a massed band on the occasion of his Possession, on Sunday 9th of April 2000. The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa felt that it could not accept this invitation because the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen still hadn't revoked

²¹ Minutes 2000, Meeting 11, 23 rd March 2000

²² As the author remembers it

²³ Minutes 2000, Meeting 2, 12 th November 1999

²⁴ Minutes 2000, Meeting 7, 2 nd February 2000

²⁵ As the author remembers it

the dismissal of Honorary President Anthony Camilleri.²⁶ In case an agreement was not reached, however, a suggestion was made that a band club played before and another after the mass to celebrate the Possession. With a sense of goodwill, on the occasion of a new millennium, the Committee for Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen revoked all sanctions.²⁷

The Parish Priest Pace took the initiative and spoke to the Committee for the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen,²⁸ and then attended a meeting of the Central Committee for the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa during which he read a letter from the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen which revoked all sanctions against all ex-members of the latter band club. Hence the Central Committee for the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa accepted the invitation to play as a massed band for the Parish Priest's Possession. For this occasion, the Committees for both band clubs had to meet with Parish Priest Pace on the 30th of March to take care of the necessary preparation.²⁹

Despite the rain, the Possession's ceremony went ahead as planned and the mass was celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop, Annetto Depasquale. The Presidents from both local band clubs acted as the Parish Priest Pace's witnesses, Simon Micallef on behalf of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa and Alexander Caruana on behalf of the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen. After the mass, both band clubs met Parish Priest Pace on the parvis and then proceeded to march around the parish's central roads as a massed band until they got to the primary school where a reception was held in its hall.³⁰

The relationship between the two band clubs had continued to improve significantly, so much so that the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen invited representatives from the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa for the opening of the exhibition which the former had organised for Holy Week.³¹

BOOK ABOUT THE BAND CLUB'S HISTORY

The idea for this publication goes back to the band club's first decade when the Central Committee asked local musician Stephanie Barbara to start researching with the intention of publishing the story of the band club for the benefit of the Birżebbuġa locals, feast enthusiasts and Maltese band clubs.³² This, however, did not materialise.

²⁶ Minutes 2000, Meeting 10, 16 th March 2000

²⁷ Interview with Alexander Caruana, who at that time was President of the Ghaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen

²⁸ Minutes 2000, Meeting 11, 23 rd March 2000

²⁹ Minutes 2000, Meeting 12, 29 th March 2000

³⁰ As the author remembers it

³¹ Minutes 2000, Meeting 14, 14 th April 2000

³² ibid.

WARRINGTON BRASS BAND

The British band Warrington Brass Band's administration asked the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa to once again hold a musical concert in Birżebbuġa. The Central Committee accepted this proposal and proposed that this concert be held on the 23rd of July 2000.³³

NEW MUSICAL BANDSTAND FOR THE BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA

The need for the Banda Birżebbuġa to own its musical bandstand instead of having to borrow one from another band club had been felt for some time. This bandstand was designed such that it not only has space for a full symphonic band but to also accommodate a choir and a large percussion section. This platform was to be set up in Misraħ il-Knisja, at the start of Kurat Fenech Street.³⁴ The first time the Banda Birżebbuġa performed on this bandstand was on Saturday the 5th of August, during which concert the band exhibited the Inno di Gloria, *Tv Es Petrvs*, with lyrics by poet Joe Julian Farrugia and music composed by Mro Ray Sciberras, for the first time in Birżebbuġa.³⁵

FLAG OF HONOUR OF THE SACRED HEART

The Central Committee felt the need to rent a new garage for the band club's needs to be better met. The garage was rented from Pawlu Camilleri, known as *Ta' Pazzi*, who had offered to pay for the new flag of honour dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.³⁶

RECOGNITION FOR THE FOUNDERS

As an act of thanksgiving to the band club's founders, the Central Committee felt that it should recognise their work in the year celebrating the tenth anniversary. Hence due recognition was given to Anthony Camilleri, Jason Vella, Joseph Caruana, Alexander Caruana, Angelo Cutajar and Raymond Cutajar.³⁷

THE ANNIVERSARY OF MGR. MINUTI'S ORDINATION

For the occasion of 60 years since ex-Parish Priest Mgr. Minuti's Sacerdotal Ordination, who had remained a resident in Birżebbuġa, the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was invited for a thanksgiving mass, which it attended and for which the Committee wore a set of ties embroidered with the band club's insignia for the first time.³⁸

A FORMAL AGREEMENT ABOUT THE TITULAR FEAST

A formal agreement regarding the titular feast between the two local band clubs, and Parish Priest Fr. Nikol Pace was a positive development in the relationship between the two band clubs. Hence starting in 1998, the march with Saint Peter's statue started being alternated

³³ ibid.

³⁴ Minutes 2000, Meeting 15, 25 th April 2000

³⁵ As the author remembers it

³⁶ Minutes 2000, Meeting 16, 9 th May 2000

³⁷ ibid

³⁸ Minutes 2000, Meeting 17, 23 rd May 2000

between Thursday and Friday,³⁹ and the concerts, instead of being done on Saturday by both band clubs, started being done one on Friday and the other on Saturday.⁴⁰ The band club which did the concert on Friday is the one which had done the sea demonstration and march with Saint Peter's statue on Thursday, whilst the band club which did the concert on Saturday was the one which had done the sea demonstration and march with Saint Peter's statue on Friday. Parish Priest Fr. Nikol Pace suggested that a *Lejla Sajfija* be organised by the parish and the two band clubs.⁴¹ This was held on the 15th and 16th of July 2000.⁴² Apart from this, during the feast's week, both band clubs started inviting each other for drinks at the respective band club's premises.⁴³

CONCLUSION

Hence ended the 2000 administrative year, the year of the Millennium, the year of the Great Jubilee and the year of the tenth anniversary of the official establishment, but also a year during which the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa managed to regroup after what it went through during the issue regarding the statue of the Risen Christ in 1999, a year which brought changes in both the band club and the parish, a year during which the band club was very active, a year which brought beautiful harmonious relationships between the two local band clubs, which relationships remained strong for years. The Central Committee's enthusiasm aided by the support of the members for the second decade was massive, and this was to lead to the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa making huge steps in a relatively short time of its existence.

³⁹ As the author remembers it

⁴⁰ Minutes 2000, Meeting 18, 29 th May 2000

⁴¹ ibid.

⁴² Minutes 2000, Meeting 21, 4 th July 2000

⁴³ Minutes 2000, Meeting 22, 18 th July 2000

Blessing 'The Last Supper' exhibition (lċ-Ċenaklu) 1999.



The front cover of the funeral marches casette.



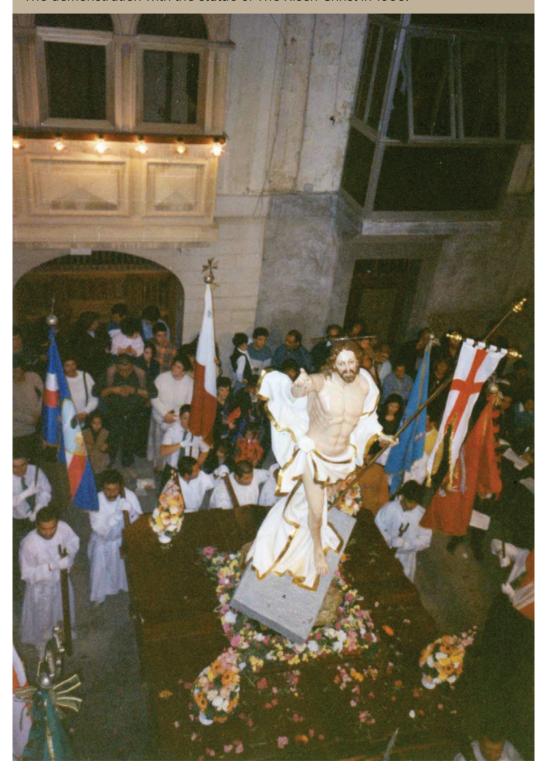
The 'Cenaklu' exhibition in 1999.



Presentation of mementoes to the members who voluntary organised The Last Supper exhibition.



The demonstration with the statue of The Risen Christ in 1999.



Moment from the celebration for when Fr Nikol Pace was conferred the office of parish prieSt Both local band clubs accompanied the new Parish PrieSt





Auxiliary Archbishop Annetto Depasquale conferring the office of Parish Priest to Fr. Nikol Pace.



Works on the bandstand (plancier).



Another phase from the works on the bandstand.



Theatrical productions organised by the Band Club.



An exchange of gifts between the Parish Priest and the two presidents of the Band Clubs.



Parish Priest Fr. Ġużepp Farrugia at the end of his pastoral work in the year 2000.







The Youth Section (Sezzjoni Żgħażagħ Iljuni) published a leaflet for the 2000 titular feast, when the Band Club was celebrating its 10th anniversary.

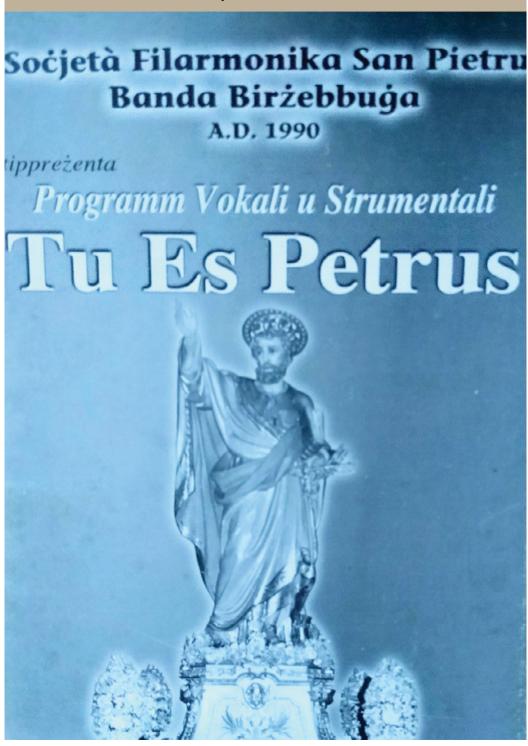


Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru Banda Birżebbuga A.D. 1990

Sezzjoni Żghażagh Iljuni



10 Snin Anniversarju 1990 - 2000 The leaflet for the Vocal and Instrumental Concert that was held in the Sir Temi Żammit Hall at the University of Malta.



During the Vocal and Instrumental Concert held at the University of Malta, the, where Inno di Gloria Tu Es Petrus was performed for the first time.



Parish Priest Fr. Ġużepp Farrugia during the ceremony when the statue is taken out of the niche.



A historic photo; the facade of the private residence of the Caruana Family, where Alexander and Joseph used to live, decorated for the feast in the 1980s.



Festivities during the morning march on the day of the titular feaSt





INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM WITH IMMENSE ENTHUSIASM

fter two turbulent years because of the issues regarding the statue of the Risen Christ as well as changes in the individuals occupying administrative positions, the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa's incoming Committee for the years 2000 and 2001 met for the first time on the 2nd of November with the Committee being composed as follows: Simon Micallef as President assisted by Freddie Formosa, Joseph Caruana as Secretary assisted by Alex Azzopardi, Grazio Pullicino assisted by Alfrida Formosa and Anthony Vella, Angelo Cutajar as Director General, Frans Cassar as Director for the premises, Raymond Cutajar as Director for Festive Decorations, Alfrida Formosa as Director for the Band Club's hall, Freddie Formosa and Lawrence Borg as Directors for Sports, Louis Balzia as Public Relations Officer, Ronnie Micallef and Francis Zammit as Archivists, Alex Azzopardi and Joseph Caruana as band delegates, Simon Micallef as representative for the Firework Section, Alfrida Formosa as representative for the Youth Section and Women's Section, Ronnie Galea was appointed as the person responsible for the musical bandstand, whilst Emanuel Mangion and Emanuel Zammit were appointed the band club's representatives at the Malta Band Club Association.¹

THE WORK CONTINUES

During the first meetings of the Central Committee, it was decided that a fundraising marathon was to be held for the feast of the Immaculate Conception on the 8th of December 2000² whilst the activities for Christmas were also discussed as well as improvements to the titular feast dedicated to Saint Peter. One of the proposals on which there were

¹ Minutes 2001, Meeting 1, 2 nd November 2000

² ibid.

agreements with the other band club, was that the concerts be held in an alternating manner, once on the third day of the Tridum and once on the feast's Eve.³ When the Banda Birżebbuġa was to have its concert on the feast's eve it was to exhibit the Inno di Gloria *Tu Es Petrus*.⁴ Furthermore, an agreement was also reached regarding the marches on Tuesday and Wednesday.⁵ This agreement was signed by representatives of both band clubs in the presence of the Superintendent of the Birżebbuġa Police Station on the 22nd of March 2001.⁶

PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL COMPETITION FOR STREET DECORATIONS

The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa decorated its premises and Birżebbuġa Street with various designs and decorations for the Christmas festivities and took part in the National Competition for street decorations.⁷

RECORDING OF FESTIVE MARCHES AND MUSICAL SERVICES

The popularity of the Banda Birżebbuġa continued into the new millennium. The invitation from the *Għaqda tal-Pawlini* to hold a march for the last day of the Tridum of the feast dedicated to Saint Paul Shipwrecked, on the 8th of February 2001 was iterated once again as well as an invitation from the Committee for External Feasts in Rabat to hold a march and concert on the eve of the feast of Corpus Domini. It was decided to record a cassette of festive marches⁸ and subsequently, in 2002 another recording of festive marches was done on compact disc.

Once again, the Banda Birżebbuġa was invited for a musical service during the feast for Saint Paul in Hal Safi ⁹ as well as a service during the feast dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary in Gudja. ¹⁰ Other services for which the Banda Birżebbuġa had been invited included the feast for Our Lady of Liesse in Valletta on the 10th of June 2001, the feast of Saint Joseph in Għaxaq, ¹¹ as well as the feast of the Annunciation in Balzan on the 5th of July 2001 ¹² and to the feast of Our Lady's Assumption in Gudja.

THE FEAST OF CATHEDRA PETRI

In 2001 besides participating in the solemn mass for the feast of Cathedra Petri in the Birżebbuġa Parish Church, the Banda Birżebbuġa, after an absence of a year due to the celebrations of its tenth anniversary, presented the concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* on

- 3 Minutes 2001, Meeting 2, 9 th November 2000
- 4 Minutes 2001, Meeting 12, 26 th March 2001
- 5 Minutes 2001, Meeting 5, 19 th December 2000
- 6 Minutes 2001, Meeting 12, 26 th March 2001
- Minutes 2001, Meeting 3, 24 th November 2000
- 8 Minutes 2001, Meeting 4, 5 th December 2000
- 9 Minutes 2001, Meeting 7, 16 th January 2001
- 10 Minutes 2001, Meeting 10, 1 st March 2001
- 11 Minutes 2001, Meeting 17, 5 th June 2001
- 12 Minutes 2001, Meeting 7, 16 th January 2001

the 6th of February 2001, whilst an exhibition of the band club's statue was held until the 24th of February 2001.¹³

THEATRICAL IDEAS

It was decided for a play to be made for the Holy Week with the characters from the Last Supper.¹⁴ The script was to be made by Mario Sant, who was also responsible for directing the play *Inti Pietru*, which was planned to be once again produced by the Youth Section.¹⁵ The plan was for this play to be held at the Birżebbuġa Primary School's hall sometime in February or March 2002.¹⁶

THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART

The Central Committee wanted the procession for the feast of the Sacred Heart to be accompanied by Eucharistic hymns played by the Banda Birżebbuġa. Secretary Joseph Caruana spoke to Parish Priest Fr Nikol Pace on this matter.¹⁷ The Parish Priest, however, took the decision not to accept this requeSt¹⁸

DONATION FOR THE BANDSTAND AND THE COLUMN

Ronnie Galea asked for a formal contract to be drafted for it to be kept in the band club's archives documenting the fact that he was passing the ownership of the new musical bandstand to the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa; this request was met with unanimous approval by the Central Committee.¹⁹ Apart from this, the brothers Joe, Angelo and Raymond Cutajar were going to gift a column for the exposition of Saint Peter's statue at the end of the march on Thursday or Friday, depending on the band club's turn.²⁰

PAINTING FOR THE BAND CLUB'S HALL

The painter Joseph Darmanin finished a painting of Saint Peter, and this was placed in the main hall of the band club's premises, today known as Anthony Camilleri Hall.²¹ It was later moved to the committee's hall, today known as St Ġorġ Preca Hall.²²

PLAN FOR A FLAG AND AN OFFICIAL FLAG OF HONOUR

The designer Antoine Farrugia, from Valletta, was contacted by the Central Committee of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa to create two designs, one for a new

- 13 Minutes 2001, Meeting 7, 16 th January 2001
- 14 Minutes 2001, Meeting 7, 16 th January 2001
- 15 Minutes 2001, Meeting 7, 16 th January 2001
- 16 Minutes 2001, Meeting 21, 23 rd August 2001
- 17 Minutes 2001, Meeting 7, 16 th January 2001
- 18 Interview with President Alexander Caruana
- 19 Interview with President Alexander Caruana
- 20 Minutes 2001, Meeting 19, 3 th July 2001
- 21 Interview with President Alexander Caruana
- 22 Interview with President Alexander Caruana

official flag of honour ²³ as well as an estimate for a flag to be flown from the premises' main flagpole.²⁴ The plan for the latter flag dated back to 1999, when one of the founders, Jason Vella, concluded the first design for one.²⁵ The flag of honour was to be blessed during the rally held during the titular feast on the 27th of July 2001 ²⁶ and during the 2002 titular feast, on the Sunday prior to the titular feast, the 28th of July 2002, the new flag, which cost Lm1.000, was flown for the first time.²⁷

THE FEAST'S XALATA

In preparation for the titular feast, numerous activities were held by the various sections which formed part of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, including horse races by the Fireworks Section ²⁸ as well as a barbeque and beach party organised by the Youth Section.²⁹ The latter section also took the initiative to decorate the bottom parts of the band club's premises' façade with granite hence giving it a more majestic appearance. They contacted sculptor and composer Ronald Pisani for this work.³⁰

Another initiative was to organise a trailer for the traditional *xalata* on the day after the titular feast ³¹ however the permit for this was not issued.³²

The titular feast dedicated to Saint Peter Apostle in 2001 was to be broadcasted live on the television station Net, during the programme *Forċina*.³³ Apart from this, the feast was also given prominence on the radio stations Eden,³⁴ RTK,³⁵ One and 101.3³⁶

As recognition for each other's work, the two local band clubs started presenting each other with a gift and inviting each other for drinks at the premises of the respective band club on Monday, when the statue is taken out of its niche.³⁷

And hence ended the 2001 administrative year, and during the first meeting of the Central Committee the following Central Committee was composed for the 2002 administrative year:

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23 Minutes 2002, Meeting 23, 12 th August 2002
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²⁴ Minutes 2002, Meeting 23, 12 th August 2002

²⁵ Minutes 2002, Meeting 23, 12 th August 2002

²⁶ Minutes 2002, Meeting 23, 12 th August 2002

²⁷ Minutes 2002, Meeting 23, 12 th August 2002

²⁸ Minutes 2001, Meeting 17, 5 th June 2001

²⁹ Minutes 2001, Meeting 17, 5 th June 2001

³⁰ Minutes 2001, Meeting 17, 5 th June 2001

³¹ Minutes 2001, Meeting 17, 5 th June 2001

³¹ Millutes 2001, Meeting 17, 5 th Julie 2001

³² Minutes 2001, Meeting 17, 5 th June 200133 Minutes 2001, Meeting 17, 5 th June 2001

³⁴ Minutes 2001, Meeting 17, 5 th June 2001

³⁵ Minutes 2001, Meeting 17, 5 th June 2001

³⁶ Minutes 2001, Meeting 17, 5 th June 2001

³⁷ Minutes 2001, Meeting 17, 5 th June 2001

Simon Micallef as President assisted by Alfred Formosa, Joseph Caruana as Secretary assisted by Alex Azzopardi and Angelo Vella, Grazio Pullicino as Treasurer assisted by Alfrida Formosa, Louis Balzia as Public Relations Officer, Angelo Cutajar as Director General, Frans Cassar and Marco Vella as Directors for the band club's premises, Angelo Vella as Director for decorations, Alfrida Formosa as Director for the Band Club's hall, Alex Azzopardi as band delegate assisted by Aronne Micallef, Laurence Borg and Marco Vella as Directors for Sports, Emanuel Mangion as Director for Publications and representative at the Malta Band Club Association, Mario Calleja responsible for the logistics of social events, Aronne Micallef and Francis Zammit as Archivists, Simon Micallef as representative for the Firework Section, Alex Azzopardi as representative for the Band Section, Alfrida Formosa as representative of the Women's Section and Angelo Vella as representative for the Youth Section.³⁸

ELDERLY OF THE YEAR CONTEST

The Central Committee nominated Grazio Pullicino for the Elderly of the Year Contest, a contest which was organised by the Birżebbuġa Local Council.³⁹ At the time discussions were also initiated with the Banda Konti Ruġġieru from Rabat and Banda San Pawl from Ħal Safi for musical services to be held in exchange for each other's feasts.⁴⁰

GIFTING OF MUSIC TO THE BAND CLUB

Mro Paul Buttigieg gave the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa some musical pieces which he had composed,⁴¹ whilst the administration of the Banda Ċittadina King's Own from Valletta gifted a march composed by Mro. Casapinta.⁴² Major Anthony Aquilina also gifted several marches named 'L-Imgħallem', 'Marija n-Naxxarija', 'Manweli' and 'Marie Louise'.⁴³

In the meantime, the Banda Birżebbuġa continued receiving invitations to participate in feasts outside of Birżebbuġa, including during the feast of St Mary in Gudja on the 11th of August 2002,⁴⁴ the feast of Our Lady of Consolation in Gudja on the 31st of August 2002 as well as the feast of Our Lady's Annunciation in Balzan, a service which was done in exchange.⁴⁵ Another exchange that started being done in 2002 was with the Banda San Ġużepp from Għaxaq.⁴⁶ The Banda Birżebbuġa was also invited for a march around the streets of the locality for the feast of Our Lady of the Carmel in Fgura.⁴⁷

- 38 Minutes 2002, Meeting 1, 9 th October 2001
- 39 ibid.
- 40 ibid.
- 41 Minutes 2002, Meeting 19, 10 th June 2002
- 42 Minutes 2002, Meeting 19, 10 th June 2002
- 43 Minutes 2002, Meeting 19, 10 th June 2002
- 44 Minutes 2002, Meeting 12, 14 th March 2002
- 45 Minutes 2002, Meeting 12, 14 th March 2002
- 46 Minutes 2002, Meeting 12, 14 th March 2002
- 47 Minutes 2002, Meeting 12, 14 th March 2002

A NEW APPOINTMENT FOR MRO. BUGELLI

The Musical Director for the Banda Birżebbuġa, Mro Michael Bugelli was appointed Musical Director for the Banda San Pawl in Ħal Safi. The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa wished him success in his new appointment, and from his end, Bugelli promised that despite this appointment his first preference would still remain the Banda Birżebbuġa.⁴⁸

WORK ON THE PREMISES' FACADE

When the Youth Section took the initiative to decorate the façade with granite, some designs were made and marbler Ronnie Pisan was contacted once again ⁴⁹ who estimated that the work was going to cost Lm4,100.⁵⁰ The Central Committee planned for the work to be inaugurated on the 16th of September on the fifth anniversary from when the "Ġawhra ta' San Pietru" became the band club's property.⁵¹ Unfortunately the permit couldn't be obtained because of various complications and hence the inauguration ceremony had to be called off.⁵² The premises' main flag post's harp was also plated by Alexander Caruana who covered the expense as a donation to the band club.⁵³

THE FEAST OF CATHEDRA PETRI

In 2002, the feast of Cathedra Petri was celebrated with the participation of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa in the solemn mass at the Birżebbuġa parish church, and the traditional concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* held on the 1st of March 2002.⁵⁴

EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

For the feast of Pentecost, on the 19th of May 2002, a Eucharistic Congress was held in Birżebbuġa. A pilgrimage was held from the bus terminus to the parish church dedicated to Saint Peter the Apostle. For this pilgrimage, the statue of Christ was used, and it was accompanied by a massed band of the two local band clubs.⁵⁵

IDEAS FOR EXPANSION OF THE PREMISES

The 2002 Central Committee started brainstorming on how the premises could be expanded. During a meeting with Jason Vella, one of the founders of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, he explained what permits would be required for the shed (*ir-remissa*) and façade.⁵⁶ The decoration enthusiasts also took the initiative

- 48 Minutes 2002, Meeting 3, 6 th November 2001
- 49 Minutes 2002, Meeting 24, 26 th August 2002
- 50 Minutes 2002, Meeting 24, 26 th August 2002
- 51 Minutes 2002, Meeting 24, 26 th August 2002
- 52 Minutes 2002, Meeting 24, 26 th August 2002
- 53 Minutes 2002, Meeting 21, 8 th July 2002
- 54 Minutes 2002, Meeting 2, 25 th October 2001
- 55 Minutes 2002, Meeting 11, 18 th February 2002
- 56 Minutes 2002, Meeting 11, 18 th February 2002

to change the *liedna* used to decorate Birżebbuġa Street and hence they were to make a new one themselves, at their own expense, and which *liedna* was to be kept in the parish's decoration warehouse in St Rita Street.⁵⁷

KARMNU ATTARD'S FUNERAL

At the start of June 2002, Birżebbuġa was shocked by the passing away of Karmenu Attard, known as 'I-Għawdxi' (the Gozitan) who during the last years of his life had been the Treasurer for the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen. The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa offered that its musicians join those of the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen for the final farewell to a person respected by all the Birżebbuġa locals. The Attard family immensely appreciated this gesture.⁵⁸

THE BAND CLUB'S WEBSITE

Given the global advances in technology, the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa also wanted to keep itself updated with the times, and hence as was the norm during those time, it started working on a website such that the band club reaches people outside of Malta in the best way possible. The website can be found at the address www. birżebbuġaband.org.⁵⁹

THE MUSICAL PLATFORM

The plans for the band club's musical platform continued. The Central Committee contacted artist Salvu Bugeja to create designs for the bandstand's sculpture, ⁶⁰ something which is yet to be done on the date of publication of this book. During that year, in preparation for the 2003 titular feast, a new flagpole started being manufactured and a set of cymbals was purchased for the band club's instrumentation. ⁶¹

THE 2003 CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The 2003 Central Committee was composed of President Simon Micallef assisted by Freddie Formosa, Secretary Johan Briffa assisted by Alex Azzopardi, Treasurer Grazio Pullicino assisted by Alfrida Formosa and Anthony Vella, Director General Tarcisio Bongailas, Directors for the Premises and Decorations Angelo and Raymond Cutajar, Director for Activities Freddie Formosa, band delegate Alex Azzopardi, Archivist Emanuel Zammit, Women Section representative Alfrida Formosa, Firework Section representative Simon Micallef, Public Relations Officer Louis Balzia and Director for Sports Marco Vella as well as Mario Calleja. 62

⁵⁷ Minutes 2002, Meeting 18, 27 th May 2002

⁵⁸ Minutes 2002, Meeting 20, 24 th June 2002

⁵⁹ Minutes 2002, Meeting 22, 23 rd July 2002

⁶⁰ Minutes 2002, Meeting 23, 12 th August 2002

⁶¹ Minutes 2002, Meeting 23, 12 th August 2002

⁶² Minutes 2003, Meeting 1, 30 th September 2002

INVITATION TO AN EXHIBITION

The Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa participated in an exhibition by the Għaqda Mużikali Marija Annunzjata from Tarxien⁶³ and also accepted an invitation by the Birżebbuġa Local Council for the Banda Birżebbuġa to participate in a Christmas activity by playing carols.⁶⁴

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Between the start of December 2002 and the start of January 2003 the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was busy with numerous activities, including participation in the mass for the Novena of the Baby Jesus on the 23rd of December 2002 together with the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen, as well as a march along the streets of Birżebbuġa on the 29th of December 2002.⁶⁵

RESHUFFLE IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2003

Because of resignations from several members of the Committee, some changes needed to be made in the roles. Mario Calleja who was a runner-up in the elections for the Central Committee was co-opted,⁶⁶ whilst Tarcisio Bongailas was appointed Director General.⁶⁷ In 2003, the annual concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* was held on the eve of the feast of Cathedra Petri, on the 21st of February 2003.⁶⁸

PRIMA MESSA

In 2003, the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was invited together with the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen to participate in the first solemn mass by Fr. Stephen Mifsud MSSP, on the eve of the feast for Saint Peter and Saint Paul Apostles, 28th of June 2003.⁶⁹ Another Prima Messa with the participation of the Banda Birżebbuġa was that of Fr. John Berry which was held a week before the 2003 titular feaSt⁷⁰ On both occasions, it was decided for the official flag to be flown from the premises' main flag poSt⁷¹ Apart from this, the Banda Birżebbuġa was also invited for a service during the feast of Our Lady's Annunciation in Tarxien⁷² and the feast of Our Lady of Grace in Żabbar, by the Għaqda Madonna tal-Grazzja, Banda San Mikiel.⁷³

NEW FLAG OF HONOUR

The Central Committee felt that it was time for a new flag of honour to be made, embroidered

- 63 Minutes 2003, Meeting 3, 31 st October 2002
- 64 Minutes 2003, Meeting 3, 31 st October 2002
- 65 Minutes 2003, Meeting 6, 17 th December 2002
- 66 ibid.
- 67 ibid.
- 68 ibid.
- 69 Minutes 2003, Meeting 13, 1 st April 2003
- 70 Minutes 2003, Meeting 13, 1 st April 2003
- 71 Minutes 2003, Meeting 13, 1 st April 2003
- 72 Minutes 2003, Meeting 13, 1 st April 2003
- 73 Minutes 2003, Meeting 13, 1 st April 2003

in gold thread, to serve as the principal flag of honour. This flag of honour was ordered from Pakistan for a sum of LM520.⁷⁴ It was ready in about a month and a pole was ordered especially for it.⁷⁵ It was used for the first time on the parvis, on Monday when Saint Peter's statue is taken out of its niche.⁷⁶

RESTORATION WORKS ON THE STATUE OF SAINT PETER

The statue of Saint Peter, property of the Band Club, which is used for the demonstration and during the march on one of the days of the Tridum was taken to Chev. Alfred Camilleri Cauchi's workshop so that it is gilded and the hand adjusted so that it faces upwards.⁷⁷

MGR. ĠUŻEPPI MINUTI PASSES AWAY

On the 10th of September 2003, the church bells announced the passing away of ex-Parish Priest, Mgr. Ġużeppi Minuti. Despite his service as Parish Priest of Birżebbuġa having ended in 1978, he remained in Birżebbuġa with his family and frequented the parish church regularly, including in several liturgical celebrations. He celebrated mass every day in the chapel at the Convent of the Sisters of Charity. He remained loved by the locals till the end. This is evidenced by the funeral which was held the day after his passing. A funeral march was held from the parish church to the end of Żaren Dalli Street, accompanied by the two local band clubs, joined in a massed band who performed funeral marches and hence gave their farewell to this individual who had a special place in the hearts of the Birżebbuġa locals.⁷⁸

VISITS BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Prime Minister of Malta, Honourable Dr Eddie Fenech Adami as well as the Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Dr Alfred Sant, during visits they made in Birżebbuġa, were also invited to the premises of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa. They met with the members of the Central Committee, the sections, as well as various members and supporters who were at the premises during their visits. They were also asked to sign the Visitors' Book.

THE 2004 CENTRAL COMMITTEE

During the first years of the new millennium, the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru continued advancing forward, despite the issues faced concerning financial expenses amongst other aspects. The 2004 Central Committee was led by President Simon Micallef assisted by Freddie Formosa. Secretary Johan Briffa was assisted once again by Alex Azzopardi, whilst the new Treasurer, Walter Pace was assisted by Alfrida Formosa. Secretary Johan Briffa

⁷⁴ Minutes 2003, Meeting 20, 22 nd July 2003

⁷⁵ Minutes 2003, Meeting 20, 22 nd July 2003

⁷⁶ Minutes 2003, Meeting 20, 22 nd July 2003

⁷⁷ Minutes 2003, Meeting 19, 8 th July 2003

⁷⁸ Minutes 2003, Meeting 22, 10 th September 2003

⁷⁹ Minutes 2003, Meeting 22, 10 th September 2003

was also appointed as Public Relations Officer whilst Tarcisio Bongailas kept his role as Director General. Angelo Vella was appointed Director of the Premises, Emanuel Zammit was appointed as Archivist, Alex Azzopardi as Director for Publications, Simon Micallef, Johan Briffa and Walter Pace the band club's representatives at the Malta Band Club Association, whilst Louis Balzia, Lawrence Borg, Emanuel Ebejer, Emanuel Mangion, Josef Schembri, Marco Vella, Suzanne Pace and Anthony Vella were appointed members.⁸⁰

NEW BAND DELEGATE. NEW MEMBERS AND THE BAR

It was suggested that local musician, trumpeter Kevin Barun be appointed as band delegate. The Central Committee was also asked to send compact discs with the band club's march music to its supporters in Australia and Britain.⁸¹ The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa also started accepting members under the age of eighteen for an annual fee of Lm1.⁸² Discussions were held to refurbish the ground floor of the premises, where the bar was located, to create a more attractive ambience for members and supporters.⁸³

BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA GOES ABROAD FOR THE FIRST TIME

The Banda Birżebbuġa was the first local band to be invited to perform abroad. Led by Musical Director Michael Bugelli, the Banda Birżebbuġa was invited for a number of services during the Carnival in Tunisia from the 19th to the 22nd of March 2004.⁸⁴

NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL

Tarcisio Bongailas resigned as Director General, with his place being taken by Angelo Vella. Vella suggested the publication of a newsletter to the Central Committee as several members had approached him with a suggestion in this regard.⁸⁵ At the time, the Central Committee was also planning for another recording of festive marches,⁸⁶ which was held on the 9th of May 2004⁸⁷, and the band club also received an invitiation from the Birżebbuġa Culture Club to perform during the local Carnival together with the other local band club.⁸⁸ During Holy Week, the Banda Birżebbuġa was to once again organise an exhibition and it was suggested for a concert of funeral marches to be held before its opening.⁸⁹

MUSICAL ARCHIVES

Secretary Johan Briffa contacted one of the band club's founders, Alexander Caruana to prepare a design for new musical archives. The design was approved by the Central

- 80 Minutes 2004, Meeting 1, 20 th October 2003
- 81 ibid.
- 82 ibid.
- 83 Minutes 2004, Meeting 2, 4 th November 2003
- 84 Minutes 2004, Meeting 5, 16 th December 2003
- 85 Minutes 2004, Meeting 6, 5 th January 2004
- Minutes 2004, Meeting 9, 19 th February 2004
- 87 Minutes 2004, Meeting 9, 19 th February 2004
- 88 Minutes 2004, Meeting 9, 19 th February 2004
- 89 ibid.

Committee,⁹⁰ however it was shelved for a few years because the band club had other priorities that needed taking care of.⁹¹

INAUGURATION OF THE PREMISES' FACADE

After a lot of difficulties, the marblework on the premises' artistic façade was completed and it was planned to be inaugurated on the Sunday before the titular feast, on the 25th of July 2004, after a concert of ethnic music by the Banda Birżebbuġa. 92 On the eve of this inauguration a *Lejla Maltija* was held in Birżebbuġa Street in front of the premises. 93

NEW FLAGS OF HONOUR

On the eve of the titular feast, two new flags of honour were used, one for Canada and the other for Australia, both of which are kept with great care at the band club's premises.⁹⁴

EXPANSION OF THE PREMISES

When in 1996 the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa started operating from its new premises in Birżebbuġa Street and became its absolute proprietary on the 16th of September 1997, every Central Committee henceforth with the help of various members and supporters wanted to expand the premises. One of the wishes was to purchase the pharmacy that neighboured the premises such that the bar could be moved to the ground floor. In mid-July 2004, contacts were initiated with the owners of *Martin's Pharmacy*, with the original price asked for the property being Lm70,000 to which another Lm30,000 was to be added for permit payments. ⁹⁵ The Central Committee reached an agreement with the owners for the property to be purchased for a final price of Lm65,000. The Committee borrowed Lm40,000 and a donation scheme was started amongst the members and supporters. After this agreement was reached and met with the approval of the members and supporters, ⁹⁶ the next steps were to draft a promise of sale agreement and a contract for the purchase of the pharmacy. ⁹⁷

COMMISSION FOR CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

To kindle the Christmas Spirit at the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa as well as amongst the locals, a Commission for Christmas Decorations was established ⁹⁸ and entrusted with the task of increasing the decorations in Birżebbuġa Street and in the premises, both in terms of quantity and quality⁹⁹

- 90 Minutes 2004, Meeting 13, 27 th April 2004
- 91 Minutes 2004, Meeting 13, 27 th April 2004
- 92 Minutes 2004, Meeting 19, 21 st July 2004
- 93 Minutes 2004, Meeting 19, 21 st July 2004
- 94 Minutes 2004, Meeting 18, 13 th July 2004
- 95 Minutes 2004, Meeting 20, 10 th August 2004
- 96 Minutes 2004, Meeting 20, 10 th August 2004
- 97 Minutes 2004, Meeting 20, 10 th August 2004
- 98 Minutes 2004, Meeting 20, 10 th August 2004
- 99 Minutes 2004, Meeting 22, 14 th September 2004

THE 2005 CENTRAL COMMITTEE

For the year in which the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of its official establishment, the President remained Simon Micallef assisted by Alex Azzopardi, Johan Briffa kept his place as Secretary General assisted by Louis Balzia, Treasurer Walter Pace was assisted by Alfrida Formosa whilst Louis Balzia was the Public Relations Officer assisted by Emanuel Ebejer. Director General Angelo Cutajar was assisted by Raymond Cutajar whilst Ronnie Galea was appointed Director for the Premises assisted by Emanuel Ebejer. Alex Azzopardi was also Director for Publications, Emanuel Zammit was the Archivist, Johan Briffa was the representative for the Youth Section, Sue Pace was the representative for the Women's Section, Simon Micallef was the representative for the Fireworks Section, Christopher Camilleri was the representative for the Band Section whilst Robert Baldacchino, Tarcisio Bongailas, Emanuel Zammit and Anthony Vella were members.¹⁰⁰

PLANS FOR THE FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

As the anniversary approached in 2005, the Central Committee started working on a schedule of events to commemorate it. The activities were to include a thanksgiving mass on the 14th of January 2005, the day on which the first general meeting of the band club was held at the Lido Hall back in 1990 leading to the official establishment of the band club, as well as a musical concert in the Birżebbuġa Primary School's hall. The concert was to be combined with the annual concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* for the feast of Cathedra Petri, and was to be held on the 26th of February 2005.¹⁰¹ During a meeting of the Central Committee it was suggested to invite the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Archbishop as dignitaries.¹⁰² A white logo with the insignia which the band club had published for the anniversary was created for this concert.¹⁰³

COLLECTION OF MUSIC

With the aim of having a variety of music in its archives, the Central Committee started checking which members had kept some musical pieces in their possession for these to be recollected. This was because whilst refurbishment was being done at the premises, several members offered to store music pieces for the band club such that they are not damaged or loSt Given that that risk was no longer there, the band club wanted to recollect these pieces and store them at its premises.¹⁰⁴

CHRISTMAS 2004

During the 2004 Christmas festivities, the Banda Birżebbuga together with the Banda

¹⁰⁰ Minutes 2005, Meeting 1, 19 th October 2004

¹⁰¹ Minutes 2005, Meeting 9, 15 th February 2005

¹⁰² Minutes 2005, Meeting 9, 15 th February 2005

¹⁰³ Minutes 2005, Meeting 9, 15 th February 2005

¹⁰⁴ Minutes 2005, Meeting 3, 17 th November 2004

San Pietru fil-Ktajjen played Christmas hymns during the mass for the ninth day of the Novena, on the 23rd of December 2004. A static crib was once again made by Anthony Buhagiar and Birżebbuġa Street was decorated with the help of various members and supporters. Both the crib and the street decorations participated in the National Christmas Competitions.¹⁰⁵

HOLY WEEK COMMISSION

After a commission was established for the Christmas Festivities, a need was felt to also establish a commission for Holy Week, to kindle the devotion amongst the band club's members and the locals.¹⁰⁶

CHANGES IN THE FESTIVE MARCH'S ROUTES AND IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The police station's Superintendent proposed that the routes for the morning march, which was the only march during the titular feast's week, during which the opposing band clubs passed in front of each other's premises, be changed such that trouble is surely avoided. Despite initially taking a stance in disagreement with this proposal, ¹⁰⁷ from 2005 onwards the band clubs didn't pass in front of the others' premises during any of the festive marches. ¹⁰⁸

During a General Meeting on the 28th of September 2005, President Simon Micallef announced that he wasn't going to contest for the role of President of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, and hence the band club was to have its third President for the 2006 administrative year.¹⁰⁹

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a general overview was given of the operations of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa. Naturally, it is impossible for all musical services and activities that were held throughout the years to be mentioned. Despite the noticeable diminishment of the enthusiasm that the band club had at the start, a sense of maturity was always being employed and whilst the band club continued investing in its musical, social and cultural sectors, it also started being economical such that when the ideal moment came it would be in a position to collectively spend at liberty. Wisdom serves to create a stronger and even more beautiful future.

¹⁰⁵ Minutes 2005, Meeting 4, 1 st December 2004

¹⁰⁶ Minutes 2005, Meeting 6, 4 th January 2005

¹⁰⁷ As the author remembers it

¹⁰⁸ As the author remembers it

¹⁰⁹ Minutes 2005, Meeting 21, 15 th September 2005



The leaflet of the concert for when the band club celebrated its 15th Anniversary.







More moments from the trip in Tunisia.



Part of the group in Tunisia.



The Banda Birżebbuġa with other bands from around the world that participated in the Carnival of Carthage.



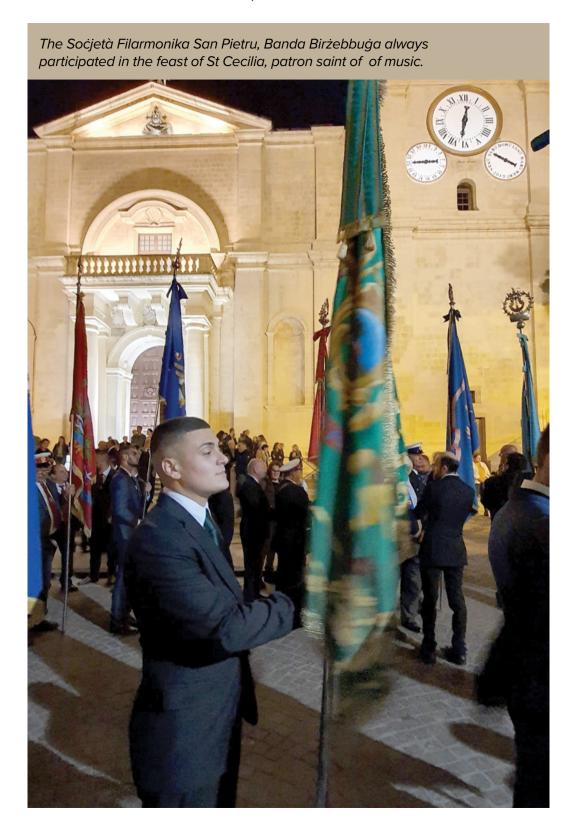


The band club's Flag of Honour in the Cathedral for the feast of St Cecilia.



The main Flag of Honour with golden embroidery.





Memories from 1997- unveiling the plaque that commemorates the historic date when the band club became the sole owner of its premises.



Moments from the Instrumental Concert on the eve of the titular feaSt



Festivities in the village main square.



An aerial view of the village square decorated with the old ornamental flags and bandstand.

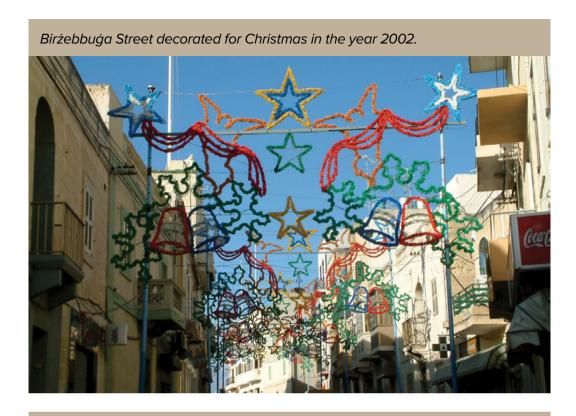


The Banda Birżebbuġa at the Greek Theatre in Birżebbuġa.



The Banda Birżebbuġa at the Greek Theatre in Pretty Bay. H.E. President of the Republic of Malta Profs. Guido De Marco was also present.







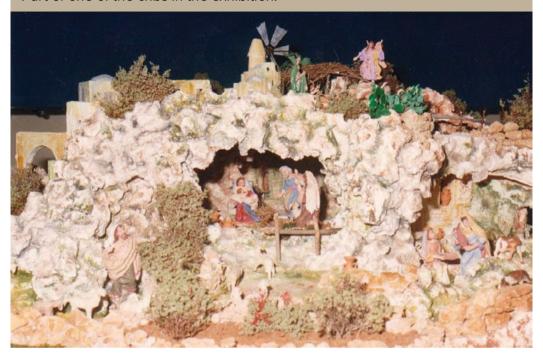
During the blessing of one of the exhibitions held at the premises.



Anthony Buhagiar describing the crib.



Part of one of the cribs in the exhibition.



The 2002 Crib.





LOOKING AHEAD

ormal life continued, and the band club continued to operate as usual, working to complete the new premises that had been acquired. With this main project on top of the schedule, the 2005 administrative year began.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2006

The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa's new President was now Jason Vella, one of the founders and first Treasurer of the Band Club. Vella was also the representative of the Fireworks Section. Josef Schembri was the Vice-President, Johan Briffa was the Secretary General assisted by Roderick Cachia. Walter Pace was the Treasurer assisted by Robert Baldacchino. Louis Balzia and Tarcisio Bongailas were the Public Relations Officers. Christopher Camilleri represented the band section, Angelo Cutajar was the Director General for Decorations, Sue Pace was the representative for the Women's Section (*Nisa Petrini*), Angelo Vella was the Director General for maintenance and representative for the Youth Section, while Emanuel Zammit as a member. Angelo Vella offered his resignation during the year.

ACQUIRING THE PHARMACY

The Central Committee had to face the problem of acquiring the pharmacy. The President talked with Ms. Antoinette Tabone about the price of the property, because since the notary had failed to renew the Preliminary Agreement (konvenju), the owner had decided to increase the price. The President stated that the agreed price of Lm65,000 was sufficient

¹ Minutes 2006, Meeting 15, 20 th April 2006

² Minutes 2006, Meeting 15, 20 th April 2006

and that the requested new price of Lm85,000 was unjuSt³ President Vella also talked to lawyer Dr Henry Antoncich, and a letter was sent to the notary, but the price remained that of Lm85,000. Because of this, an Extraordinary General Meeting was held.⁴

The Central Committee decided to issue a donation scheme for the members and supporters so that the band club could purchase the pharmacy.⁵ In the meantime, lawyer Dr Anglu Farrugia advised the Band Club that they could file a lawsuit for damages since the price increase was due to a lack of diligence from the notary.⁶

After more discussions, the new asked price was negotiated to between Lm75,000 and Lm80,000⁷ with the final price being that of Lm77,500.⁸ In the first half of 2006, Lm20,000 had already been paid, with Lm775 in stamp duties.⁹ At long last, the contract was signed on the 26th of February 2006.¹⁰ Various benefactors chose to help the band club in this investment and lent money without intereSt¹¹

MECHANICAL CRIB

For the 2005 Christmas, it was decided to display a mechanical crib at the premises. This was made by Pawlu Axiaq since Anthony Buhagiar was not feeling well.¹²

A NEW MAIN FLAGPOLE

The flagpole had irreparable damages and had to be replaced with a new one.13

THE GARA MUŻIKALI

The Malta Band Club Association wrote to the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa and expressed the wish to present and distribute the certificates of the Gara Mużikali at the band club's premises. The Central Committee agreed that if the Banda Birżebbuġa managed to win the shield, a concert was to be organised. The Banda Birżebbuġa won that edition, and the annual concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* in February 2006 was held in the Birżebbuġa Primary School. During this programme, the Malta Band Club Association presented the shield to the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru,

- 3 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 4 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 5 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 6 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 7 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 8 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 9 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 10 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 11 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 12 Minutes 2006, Meeting 2, 6 th October 2005
- 13 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 14 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 15 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005

Banda Birżebbuġa.16

Since the use of technology became a necessity to keep working at high standards, the band club decided to invest in a computer.¹⁷ At the beginning of 2006, a representative group from the Central Committee attended a seminar organised by the Malta Band Club Association.¹⁸

The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa participated again in 2007 and obtained satisfactory results. Three of the musicians who sat for the exam ranked first place in their categories. ¹⁹

CARNIVAL ACTIVITY

Apart from being instrumental in increasing the festive spirit in the external celebrations for the titular feast of Saint Peter in Birżebbuġa, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru took a lot of initiatives to organise activities during Christmas and Holy Week, especially exhibitions as well as musical and social activities. However, nothing was being done for the Carnival. Therefore, the Central Committee proposed that the band club should start organising a Carnival activity so that this tradition was also celebrated in Birżebbuġa.²⁰ In 2007, this activity was held once again, and the members and supporters manufactured a grotesque float to be used during this activity.²¹

NEWSLETTER - PETRVS

Assistant Secretary Roderick Cachia suggested that for the band club to be nearer to its members and supporters, apart from the annual publication *Minn Qalb I-Iljuni* which is published for the occasion of the titular feast, a newsletter was to be published during the year.²² His idea was accepted and the newsletter was given the name *Petrvs*, Latin for Peter, with the first editor being Henry Bonnici.²³ Thanks to a lot of members and supporters this publication was distributed door to door and reached a lot of people.

MARCH LIBRETTO BY THE MUSICAL DIRECTOR

The Central Committee decided that all the festive marches composed by Musical Director Mro Michael Bugelli were to be organised and collected in a single libretto, so that it could be used by the Banda Birżebbuġa on special occasions, like the march before the annual concert in the titular feast week.²⁴

- 16 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 17 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 18 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 19 Minutes 2006, Meeting 7, 23 rd November 2005
- 20 Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (2007); Annual Pubblication for the Titular feast, p. 11
- 21 Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (2007); Annual Pubblication for the Titular feast, p. 11
- 22 Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (2007); Annual Pubblication for the Titular feast, p. 11
- 23 Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (2007); Annual Pubblication for the Titular feast, p. 11
- 24 Minutes 2006, Meeting 17, 23 rd May 2006

ADOLESCENT GROUP

The Central Committee felt the need to organise a group where adolescents who used to frequent the band club could join. Apart from serving as a relaxing activity, these adolescents had the opportunity to join the Youth Section (Sezzjoni Żgħażagħ Iljuni), be responsible and help the band club. This group was aimed at those between thirteen and sixteen years old and was under the supervision of adult members.²⁵

CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2007

Unfortunately, as already written in the introduction, there are parts from the history of the band club that were not documented, and no minutes of the meetings were taken. One of them is the 2007 administrative year. Therefore the research and information are taken from the annual publication for the titular feaSt

Jason Vella remained the President, assisted by Tarcisio Bongailas, Johan Briffa as Secretary General assisted by Roderick Cachia, while Walter Pace was still the Treasurer, assisted by Giovanna Naudi. Secretary Johan Briffa was also chosen as Representative of the Firework Section. Director General Angelo Vella was assisted by Emanuel Ebejer, while Steven Farrugia was the new Public Relations Officer. Angelo Vella was also the representative for the Youth Section. Sue Pace was responsible for the organisation of social activities and was also the representative for the Women's Section, Christopher Camilleri was the representative for the Musicians, Andy Mifsud was the Archivist, Henry Bonnici was the Director of Publications and Clare Barbara was the Band Delegate. Jason Vella, Johan Briffa and Walter Pace represented the band club at the Malta Band Club Association.²⁶

EXPANDING THE PREMISES

As the Central Committee continued collecting funds, mainly through the donations scheme, the works to enlarge the premises continued too. The newly purchased part, known as the pharmacy, was renovated with new floor tiles, plastering and wall painting, gypsum ceiling and stone decorations so that this part became attractive and welcoming too.²⁷

MORE WORK TO DO

As usual, the Banda Birżebbuġa participated in the mass for the Novena of the Baby Jesus, together with the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen, organised the annual concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri*, Carnival celebrations and a concert for Holy Week. Mainly funeral marches were played during the latter-mentioned concert, and it was held in the newly purchased part on Palm Sunday before the opening of the Holy Week exhibition.²⁸ Most of the

²⁵ Minutes 2006, Meeting 19, 22 nd August 2006

²⁶ Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (2007); Annual Pubblication for the Titular feast, p. 15

²⁷ ibid.; p. 13

²⁸ ibid.; p. 13

costumes that were used for the visual exhibition for Holy Week were sewn by Treasurer Walter Pace and his wife Sue, whilst the actors for the re-enactments were all volunteers and members of the band club. ²⁹

PRESTIGIOUS RESULT

For the Christmas and New Year festivities, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, encouraged by the enthusiasm of its supporters, mounted the artistic crib to the façade once again and took care of the decorations of Birżebbuga Street, thanks to the help of many volunteers. The band club participated in two categories of the National Crib Competition and was classified second in both of them.³⁰

ARCHBISHOPS' VISIT

In January 2007, His Excellency, the Archbishop Pawl Cremona O.P. was appointed as the new Metropolitan Archbishop of Malta, succeeding Mgr. Gużeppi Mercieca who had offered his resignation in 2003 and passed to eternal life in 2016. In 2007 the Maltese Islands welcomed joyously the proclamation of Dun Gorg Preca as a Saint by Pope Benedict XVI. On Friday, the 27th of July, Archbishop Pawl Cremona O.P visited the premises of the band club,³¹ signed the Visitors' Book and inaugurated the Community Hall, which was named San Gorg Preca Hall.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2008

President Jason Vella was assisted by Joseph Caruana, Secretary General Roderick Cachia was assisted by Clare Barbara, who was also the Band Delegate, Treasurer Walter Pace was assisted by Robert Baldacchino, Sue Pace was entrusted with the organisation of social activites, Steven Farrugia was the Public Relations Officer assisted by Ryan Farrugia, Angelo Vella was the Director General assisted by Emanuel Ebejer while the Christopher Camilleri and Spiridione Camilleri were members.³² During the year Angelo Vella resigned and his role was taken by Angelo Cutajar.³³

MORE WORK TO DO

The first issues that were discussed during the administrative year, were the participation of the Banda Birżebbuġa, together with the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen, in the mass for the Novena on the 21st of December 2007, the concert during which the certificates were going to be presented by the Malta Band Club Association at the premises of the Għaqda Madonna tal-Grazzja, Banda San Mikiel, Żabbar on the 3rd of November 2007, and the participation in the Birżebbuġa Parish Assembly.

²⁹ ibid.; p. 13

³⁰ Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (2007); Annual Pubblication for the Titular feast, p. 11

³¹ Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (2007); Annual Pubblication for the Titular feast, p. 11

³² Minutes 2008, Meeting 12, 23 rd April 2008

³³ Minutes 2008, Meeting 12, 23 rd April 2008

To be more professional, even when sending letters and emails, an official letterhead was designed.³⁴ The Central Committee wanted to safeguard and protect all the premises of the band club and it was decided to install security cameras.³⁵ The annual concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* was planned to be held on the 23rd of February, the day after the feast of Cathedra Petri.

The Committee also decided to change the Christmas decorations in Birżebbuġa Street. President Jason Vella offered to cover the expenses for these new decorations. A reception for which all the sponsors were invited was held.³⁶ In the first months of 2008, the Central Committee of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa held a cordial meeting with the representatives and the committee of the Birżebbuġa Regatta Club, to discuss how the organisations and groups of Birżebbuġa could work together for the common good.³⁷

CARNIVAL AND HOLY WEEK

For the 2008 Carnival, no external activities were held but instead, a Youth Ball was organised.³⁸ For Holy Week a concert during which funeral marches were played by local musicians was organised ³⁹ and an exhibition between the 16th and 23rd of March 2008 was also held.⁴⁰ The Central Committee expressed the wish to organise an external pageant in the streets of Birżebbuġa, however, after discussions with the Ecclesiastic authorities, especially with Fr. Anton Gouder, this activity was not held.⁴¹

NEW FLAGPOLE

A new flagpole ⁴² was ordered from Josef from Żurrieq ⁴³ and was mounted on the 20th of July 2008.⁴⁴ At the same time, new furniture was acquired for the Secretary's room and various activities were planned for the coming summer, including a barbeque in Birżebbuġa Street on the 18th of July, another one on the roof the premises on the 3rd of July, a social activity on the 24th of May during the Eurovision Song Contest and an excursion to Comino on the 29th of June for *Imnarja*. A *Lejla Sajfija* was organised on the 12th and 13th of July 2008.⁴⁵

³⁴ Minutes 2008, Meeting 6, 7 th January 2008

³⁵ Minutes 2008, Meeting 6, 7 th January 2008

³⁶ Minutes 2008, Meeting 6, 7 th January 2008

³⁷ Minutes 2008, Meeting 6, 7 th January 2008

³⁸ Minutes 2008, Meeting 10, 19 th March 2008

³⁹ Minutes 2008, Meeting 10, 19 th March 2008

³⁹ Millutes 2006, Meeting 10, 19 til March 2006

⁴⁰ Minutes 2008, Meeting 10, 19 th March 2008

⁴¹ Minutes 2008, Meeting 10, 19 th March 2008

⁴² ibid.

⁴³ ibid.

⁴⁴ ibid.

⁴⁵ ibid.

THE PHARMACY

The President for the Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa proceeded to sue the Notary for the extra Lm12,000 that was paid for the Preliminary Agreement (*Konvenju*) before acquiring the pharmacy.⁴⁶

NEW HYMN MARCH

For a long time, there were discussions for a common march that is played during the feast week apart from the Popular Hymn to St Peter, lyrics by poet Fr. Frans Camilleri and composed by Mro Carmelo Pace. Alexander Caruana took the initiative and wrote the lyrics and music for the hymn march $Rag\hbar aj\ tal$ -Knisja that was donated to the $Grupp\ Armar\ 1\ ta'$ Awwissu and was played by both local band clubs and also by those band clubs that were invited. The Hymn March had musical adaptions for a symphonic band done by Simon Farrugia who for some time was also Assistant Musical Director of the Banda Birżebbuġa back in the early 1990s. The Hymn March was approved by the Ecclesiastic authorities and was performed for the first time as a massed band on Monday the 28th of July 2009, when the statue of Saint Peter was taken out of the niche.

PLANS FOR THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Performing in the Vatican City, the place that is intrinsically connected to St Peter, had always been the dream of the Committee, the musicians, the various Band Club sections, members and supporters. Since the band club was going to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of its foundation, this was the perfect way to celebrate. Hence, the necessary planning was underway so that this dream could come true by going to the Vatican as a band club for the 2010 Easter festivities.⁴⁸ After a lot of work and correspondence the band club received the confirmation that this trip to Rome and the Vatican could be done.⁴⁹

WINNING THE VICTORY DAY REGATTA

The Birżebbuġa Regatta Club won the shield for Category B during the Regatta for Victory Day in 2008. The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa presented a trophy to the Birżebbuġa Regatta Club to congratulate them for this deserved victory. This presentation was done during a celebratory event in the village square on the 14th of September 2008.⁵⁰

THE YEAR 2009

A new Central Committee was elected for 2009, the one that was going to make the decisions for the Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa during this special year, both for the band club and for the parish of Birżebbuġa. The band club was preparing

⁴⁶ Minutes 2008, Meeting 15, 29 th May 2008

⁴⁷ Minutes 2008, Meeting 29 th July 2008

⁴⁸ Minutes 2009, Meeting 9, 24 th February 2009

⁴⁹ Minutes 2009, Meeting 9, 24 th February 2009

⁵⁰ ibid.

to celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2010 and also planning its trip to Rome and the Vatican. At the same time in 2009, the parish of Birżebbuġa was celebrating the Gold Jubilee since the arrival of the titular statue of Saint. Peter, a masterpiece by Ferdinand Stuflesser. As part of the local community, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa wanted to celebrate this event too.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2009

President Jason Vella was assisted by Sue Pace. The President was also the representative of the Fireworks Section while Sue Pace was also the representative of the Women's Section. The Secretary General was Roderick Cachia assisted by Clare Barbara and Ryan Farrugia, while Walter Pace was the Treasurer assisted by Robert Baldacchino and Louis Buhagiar. Steven Farrugia was the Public Relations Officer assisted by Ryan Farrugia while Director General Angelo Cutajar was assisted by Louis Buhagiar. Etienne Zahra and Christopher Camilleri were the Band Delegates, Andy Mifsud was the Archivist, Ryan Farrugia was the representative for the Youth Section while Sue Pace was also responsible for the social activities.⁵¹ During the Annual General Meeting, Marco Vella offered his resignation as a member of the Central Committee while Tarcisio Bongailas resigned as an Honorary Member and member of the band club.⁵² During the year Steven Farrugia also resigned ⁵³and Daniel Cuschieri was co-opted instead.⁵⁴

WEBSITE

Although the Band Club already had a website, it was decided to design a new one from scratch.⁵⁵ The expense for the new website was Lm750 and it was launched on the 10th of July 2009.⁵⁶

THE TITULAR STATUE ANNIVERSARY

The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa appointed a commission, named 50 Sena Titular, composed of Jason Vella, Anthony Camilleri, Michael Schembri, Arthur Grima and Conrad d'Amato, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary from the arrival of the titular statue. During the annual concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* that was held on the 28th of February 2009, dancers accompanied the Banda Birżebbuġa ⁵⁷ and a video about the arrival of the titular statue was projected. There was the suggestion to organise a Musical-Literary evening at the Greek Theatre in Pretty Bay, a month before the titular feast to remember this anniversary in the best way possible. Apart from reading poems and prose, it was proposed to include a musical element as well as an exhibition of videos and photos.⁵⁸

- 51 Minutes 2009, Meeting 8, 12 th February 2009
- 52 Minutes 2009, Meeting 8, 12 th February 2009
- 53 Minutes 2009, Meeting 8, 12 th February 2009
- 54 Minutes 2009, Meeting 8, 12 th February 2009
- 55 Minutes 2009, Meeting 14, 25 th June 2009
- 56 Minutes 2009, Meeting 14, 25 th June 2009
- 57 Minutes 2009, Meeting 14, 25 th June 2009
- 58 Minutes 2009, Meeting 6, 7th January 2009

The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa attended as usual for the Solemn Concelebration by Archbishop Emeritus Ġużeppi Mercieca on the 22nd of February, the feast of Cathedra Petri. A poster with the words 50 Sena f'Qalbna was attached to the premises' façade and left there all year long, to urge the people of Birżebbuga to remember this historic event.⁵⁹

NEW HYMNS

On the initiative of our local musician Josef Schembri a hymn entitled *Inħobbuk Bħalma Niesna Ħabbewk* was commissioned. Lyrics were written by Professor Oliver Friggieri and the music was composed by Mro Ray Sciberras. This hymn was commissioned to commemorate this anniversary and is played every year during the titular feaSt⁶⁰ Alexander Caruana took the initiative and wrote the lyrics and music of another hymn, *San Pietru fil-Glorja*. It's a hymn divided into three parts and was arranged for the symphonic band by Mro Simon Farrugia. It was played for the first time in 2009 and was done to commemorate the Silver Jubilee from the arrival of the titular statue of Saint Peter in Birżebbuġa. It was agreed that this new hymn could be played every year at the end of the annual vocal and instrumental concert held during the feast week, while the hymn *Tu Es Petrus* started being played once every five years. All these activities were complemented by the usual activities which the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa organised every year, like performing during the feast in other localities,⁶¹ participating in the Novena on the 18th of December 2008, the crib exhibition during Christmas and the Carnival Ball.⁶²

A NEW ORNAMENTAL FLAG (BANDALORA)

For the 2008 titular feast, a new bandalora was planned as a surprise.⁶³ After a meeting with the Malta Band Club Association, it was decided that the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was to be registered as a non-governmental organisation.⁶⁴ Those in charge of *Bastjaniżi FM* requested a copy of the recording of the festive marches so that they could play them on their community radio in Qormi. The band club agreed as this meant more exposure.⁶⁵

RECORDING FESTIVE MARCHES AND HYMNS

For this anniversary year, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa decided to record another set of festive marches on a compact disc. Amongst the recorded marches, there was also the hymn *Inħobbuk Bħalma Niesna Ħabbewk*. This recording was held at the Birżebbuġa Primary School's hall.⁶⁶

- 59 Minutes 2009, Meeting 6, 7 th January 2009
- 60 Minutes 2009, Meeting 6, 7 th January 2009
- 61 Minutes 2009, Meeting 6, 7 th January 2009
- 62 Minutes 2009, Meeting 6, 7 th January 2009
- 63 Minutes 2009, Meeting 8, 12 th February 2009
- 64 Minutes 2009, Meeting 8, 12 th February 2009
- 65 Minutes 2009, Meeting 8, 12 th February 2009
- 66 Minutes 2009, Meeting 13, 20 th May 2009

THE BANDSTAND

Many members felt that the bandstand had two major problems; it was too high and was not spacious enough to hold the choir and musicians. The Central Committee contacted Alexander Caruana who had just returned as a member of the band club following the approval of the other members during the Annual General Meeting in 2008 ⁶⁷, to design a new bandstand. Caruana felt that, with respect to Ronnie Galea and the other members and supporters who dedicated their time to constructing the new bandstand in the year 2000, the bandstand was to only be modified. The steel works and the staircase were reused, and thanks to the help of members and volunteers the bandstand was ready to be used for the 2009 titular feaSt⁶⁸

CHANGE IN THE TIME OF THE MORNING MARCH

The Central Committee decided to start the morning march at 11:15 a.m. instead of at 10:30 a.m. This was done not to disturb the Solemn Concelebration on the day of the titular feaSt⁶⁹ All the marches organised by the band club during the feast week, even when an external band club was invited were to end with the Hymn March and the Popular Hymn to St Peter.⁷⁰ While the statue of Saint Peter was passing in front of the premises during the Tridum, the Banda Birżebbuġa played the hymn *Inħobbuk Bħalma Niesna Ħabbewk*.⁷¹ This same hymn was played also on the eve of the titular feaSt⁷² A *Lejla Sajfija* was also organised on two days; on the 18th and 19th of July 2009 themed around the locality.⁷³

CONCLUSION

The anniversary year was concluded with a trip to Comino on the 13th of September 2009 and a Rock Gig organised by the Youth Section on the 17th of October 2009.⁷⁴ The parish's anniversary was properly celebrated by the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, and will be remembered each time the hymn *Inħobbuk Bħalma Niesna Ħabbewk* is played.

It was then time to celebrate another anniversary, the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the band club. It was going to be celebrated in the best way possible, by going to the Vatican, near the saint for whom it was lovingly founded, Saint Peter.

⁶⁷ Interview with President Alexander Caruana

⁶⁸ Interview with President Alexander Caruana

⁶⁹ Minutes 2009, Meeting 15, 14 th July 2009

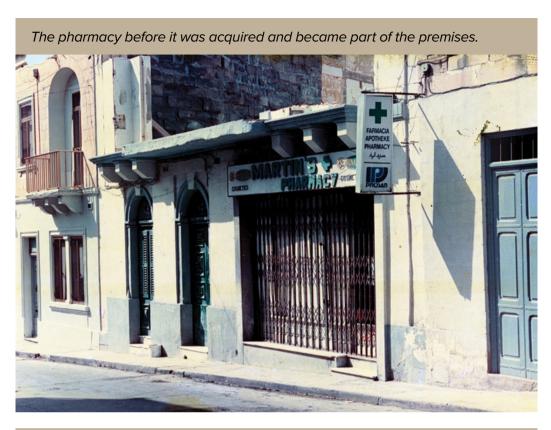
⁷⁰ Minutes 2009, Meeting 15, 14 th July 2009

⁷¹ Minutes 2009, Meeting 15, 14 th July 2009

⁷² Minutes 2009, Meeting 15, 14 th July 2009

⁷³ Minutes 2009, Meeting 15, 14 th July 2009

⁷⁴ Minutes 2009, Meeting 15, 14 th July 2009





The hymn in occasion of the 50th Anniversary from when the Titular Statue arrived in Birżebbuġa from Bolzano.



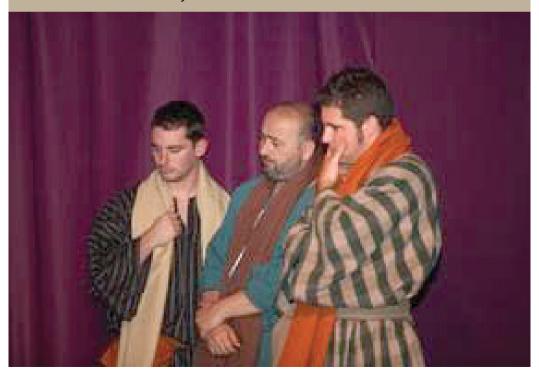
Profs. Oliver Friggieri, the poet who wrote the hymn 'Inħobbuk Bħalma Niesna Ħabbewk'.



A moment from the re-enactment during Holy Week. Many members participated under the direction of Steven Farrugia.



Another moment from Holy Week re-enactments.



Most of the costumes used for the re-enactment during the Holy Week were the work of Treasurer Walter Pace and his wife Sue Pace.



A Carnival float.



A Carnival activity in 2007.



A Carnival activity in the Primary School hall.



Carnival in 2009.



Supporting the Birżebbuġa water-polo team at the National Pool Complex.



Carnival activities organised by the band club in 2007.



The Xmun Pietru Choir under the direction of Mro Felicienne Paris.



The President of the Malta Band Club Association Lawrence Farrugia presenting the winning shield of the Gara Mużikali to President Jason Vella.





The demonstration with the statue on the boat.

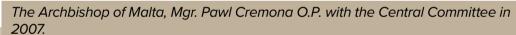


Festivities during the march.



Archbishop Mrg. Pawl Cremona O.P. welcomed in the premises during his visit to Birżebbuġa in 2007.







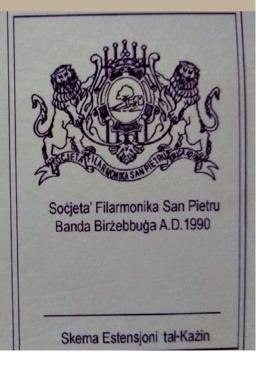
Xmun Pietru Choir performing in the Parish Church.



The scheme so that members and supporters could help the band club with their donations.

Is - Socjeta tixtieq tirringrazzjak tal-kontribuzzjoni tieghek li hija tant siewja

> Tel: 21650347 www.birzebbugaband.org





A disco organised by the Youth Section.



One of the flags used on the day of the titular feaSt



Exchange of gifts between Parish Priest Fr. Nikol Pace and the two presidents of the two band clubs after the statue of St Peter is taken out of the niche.



The demonstration by boat with the statue of St Peter during the feast week.



Pool Tournament at the premises.





An exhibition about the life of Saint Peter.

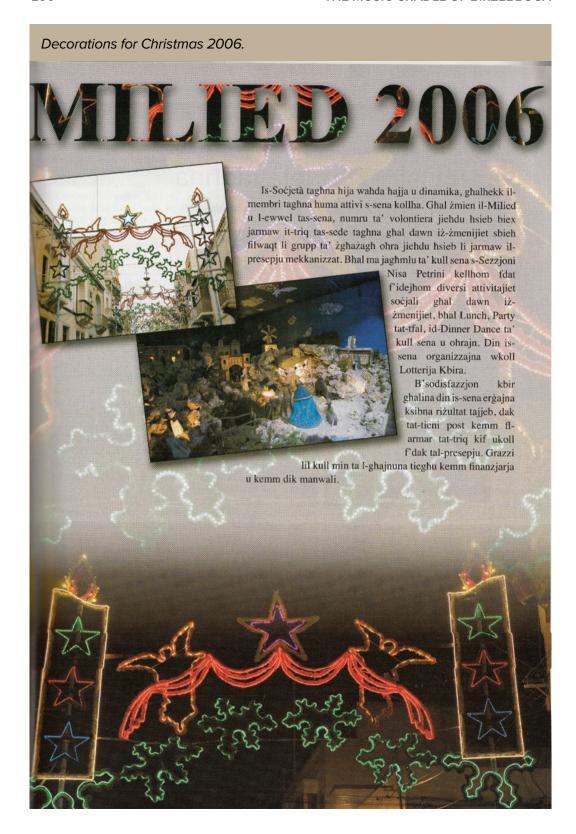


A comedy produced by the Għaqda Teatrali 14 ta' Jannar.



Part of the Christmas decorations in Birżebbuġa Street.





10

20TH ANNIVERSARY: FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE PATRON SAINT

n the 14th of January 2010, the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa commemorated twenty years from its official establishment. It was a wish of the Central Committee and various members and supporters, to go on a trip to Rome.

THE 2010 CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa remained under the leadership of President Jason Vella assisted by Sue Pace, Secretary General Roderick Cachia assisted by Clare Baldacchino and Treasurer Walter Pace assisted by Robert Baldacchino. Andy Mifsud was appointed Public Relations Officer, whilst Benji Caruana was appointed Director General assisted by Louis Buhagiar and Emmanuel Ebejer. Christopher Camilleri, Ryan Farrugia and Etienne Zahra were appointed members of the committee.¹

THE WORK CONTINUES

The work required to keep the band club up to date with the latest developments of the times continued. New flags and two flags of honour were used for the first time, one for the European Union, during the trip to Rome and the other with the insignia of the Youth Section, during the week of the titular feaSt Maintenance was also done on one of the premises' flag poles, the gypsum ceiling on the third floor was changed and a new lighting system was installed, apart from the setting up of the crib for Christmas time and the decoration of the façade during the feast of Cathedra Petri, for Christmas and Holy Week.² The annual concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* was held at the Birżebbuġa Primary School's

¹ Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (2007); Annual Pubblication for the Titular feast, p. 5

² Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (2007); Annual Pubblication for the Titular feast, p. 5

hall on the 27th of February. The Xmun Pietru Choir and the group *St Andrew's Pipes and Drums* also participated in this concert.³

THE TRIP TO ROME

During the march on Tuesday for the 2009 feast, Secretary General Roderick Cachia spoke to Alexander Caruana about his wish for the Banda Birżebbuġa to go to Rome to perform. Alexander understood the wish and the associated honour; however, he also knew that this wasn't going to be an easy thing to achieve.

At the end of August, the Secretary once again contacted Alexander and informed him that he was during a meeting of the Central Committee and that he had formally expressed his wish to the committee, with the committee agreeing to initiate contacts for the twentieth anniversary to be celebrated in Rome, following the footsteps of Saint Peter Apostle, the band club's and locality's patron saint. Alexander was astound with the news as he didn't expect it to arrive that soon, however, he immediately started working for the Secretary and the Central Committee's dream to come true. The initial plan was for the trip to be held in September 2010, however after speaking with Fr. Patrick Incorvaja, a priest from Birżebbuġa who worked in the Vatican, it was suggested that the trip be done exactly after Easter in 2010. The plan was for a concert to be held in the main square, an academy to be held in a church and to participate in an Audience with Pope Benedict XVI. Alexander initiated contacts with the Italian embassy in Malta and the Maltese embassy in Rome as well as with the Comune di Roma. Despite everything seeming difficult at the start, Alexander found a lot of help from the Maltese embassy in Rome.

Fr. Patrick Incorvaja started inquiring about what permits were required for the Banda Birżebbuġa to perform during an Audience with Pope Benedict XVI. He also inquired about a permit for a mass to be celebrated at the Saint Peter's Basilica. The venue for the academy had still not been discussed. Alexander Caruana wanted it to be held at the Basilica San Pietro in Vincoli, however, it was difficult for this to be achieved hence he started looking for another venue. The plans were moving ahead well, however, it was ideal for the academy to be held at a church dedicated to Saint Peter. It so happened that Alexander was at the Parish Residence and the Parish Priest of the time Fr Nikol Pace asked if all the plans were in place for the trip to Rome. Alexander told him that the wish for the Banda Birżebbuġa to present an academy at the Basilica San Pietro in Vincoli was still to be met. Parish Priest Pace suggested sending them a letter and then proceeding as they direct him from their end.

About two weeks later, a letter in reply was received from the Rector of the Basilica San Pietro in Vincoli, Fr. Bruno Giuliani. In the letter, he informed the band club that he hadn't replied quicker because he had been abroad, and that he was accepting the band club's request for an academy to be held at the Basilica San Pietro in Vincoli, and that he was also willing

to organise a twinning with the Banda Birżebbuġa. Satisfied but surprised by the affirmative reply, Alexander Caruana contacted President Jason Vella and Secretary Roderick Cachia to inform them. What was left at that stage was for the Banda Birżebbuġa to perform in a Roman main square on Monday 4th of April 2010, the day after Easter Sunday. The Italians celebrate that day as a public holiday known as *Pasquetta* and the *Comune di Roma*, because of the significant number of people out and about on the day didn't want to grant a permit. The Maltese embassy was trying everything they could, but they were informed that if a permit was to be granted it would only be granted on the day of the concert. This meant that the band club wouldn't know for certain if it was going to perform in a main square until the 4th of April 2010, the same day it was supposed to perform.

THE PREPARATIONS

The next step was to make accommodation arrangements for the whole group. A notice was issued and the musicians were contacted. The Central Committee expressed the wish that the Xmun Pietru Choir accompanied the band and hence the group consisted of about 100 people. In the meantime, Air Malta and a travelling agency were also contacted for all the logistical preparations to be finalised.

Restoration was done on the bass drum and a new carriage was made for it. Banners were made for the Women Section's stands as well as covers, the expense of which was covered by Secretary General Roderick Cachia. The trip was approaching and hence the rehearsals were started both by the band and the choir. As the departure approached, a meeting was held with the whole group at the band club's premises.

TRAVELLING FROM MALTA TO ROME

On Monday the 4th of April 2010, around four in the morning, the vans left Birżebbuġa to go to the Malta International Airport and the flight departed to Rome at around 6:30 in the morning. The flight stopped in Reggio Calabria as planned and then proceeded on the route to Fiumicino arriving at around 10:30 in the morning. The group boarded transport to get them to Rome where they had accommodation near the Basilica for the Santa Croce which is near the Basilica for *San Giovanni in Laterano*.

PIAZZA DI SPAGNA AND PIAZZA MIGNANELLI

Around 4:00 in the afternoon, the group left for *Piazza di Spagna* where the band was to hold a concert in Piazza Mignanelli which is adjacent to it. The contingent arrived at about 5:15 pm, and Alexander contacted the secretary for the Maltese ambassador who was to bring the permit. He was a bit late because the Comune di Rome had issued the permit on the spot. The preparations went underway quite quickly such that at 6:00 pm the Banda Birżebbuġa started its concert under the direction of Musical Director Mro Michael Bugelli. A lot of tourists crowded the square. At the end of the concert, the Banda Birżebbuġa played the European Hymn, the Maltese National Anthem and the Italian National Anthem. A photo of the contingent was taken on the famous stairs at Piazza di Spagna along with

the representatives of the Maltese embassy.

THE SAINT PETER'S BASILICA IN THE VATICAN

Tuesday 5th of April was a very busy day. At 7 in the morning the contingent left for Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, celebrating a mass in Maltese at 8:00 in the *Cappella del Coro*. Fr. Patrick Incorvaja celebrated this mass and the Xmun Pietru Choir under the direction of Mro Felicienne Paris also took part. After the mass, the contingent toured the basilica, the largest Catholic Church, constructed on the tomb of the Apostle Saint Peter. In the afternoon, the contingent prepared for that evening's academy.

THE BASILICA OF SAN PIETRO IN VINCOLI

At around 8:00 pm, in the Basilica of San Pietro in Vincoli, with the church filled with people, the Banda Birżebbuġa together with the choir Xmun Pietru started the historic academy to commemorate 20 years after the official establishment of the band club. The Banda Birżebbuġa was under the direction of Musical Director Mro Michael Bugelli. Soprano Marthese Grech and tenor Johan Briffa sang during the academy, both Birżebbuġa locals. At the end of the academy, the hymn *San Pietru fil-Glorja* and the Pontifical Hymn were exhibited. President Jason Vella gave a gift to the rector of the Basilica Fr. Bruno Giuliani and to Fr. Patrick Incorvaja for their help. Fr. Bruno was very happy that the basilica of San Pietro in Vincoli was participating in this twinning with the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa.

A PLEASANT SURPRISE

At the end of the academy, Alexander Caruana went to thank rector Fr. Bruno Giuliani personally. Fr. Bruno expressed the thought of visiting Malta and the Birżebbuġa parish because he was pleased that there was a parish dedicated to Saint Peter Apostle in Chains in Malta. Alexander asked him to go down next to the relics of Saint Peter's chains for a photo. The rector asked Alexander if a copy of those chains were to be given a prominent place in the parish church, expressing the thought of providing the parish with such a relic, with the latter replying in the affirmative. From that point onwards, the two individuals remained in contact for the copy to arrive in Birżebbuġa. Hence ended another historic evening for the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa.

THE GENERAL AUDIENCE WITH POPE BENEDICT XVI

After the academy in the Basilica of San Pietro in Vincoli, on Wednesday the 6th of April 2010, the Banda Birżebbuġa and choir Xmun Pietru were to participate in the highly expected General Audience with Pope Benedict XVI. The group left the hotel at about 7:00 a.m. and went to the Vatican. The scanning process was done and then the contingent proceeded to the statue of Saint Paul in the square, the area allocated for the Maltese contingent. An issue arose when the Vatican guards saw the band club's flags of honour entering Saint Peter's Square because it wasn't permissible to bring flags of honour into the square. Alexander Caruana intervened, as they had nowhere else to put them, and

after various interventions, the guards let them enter. Another three bands and a choir were also present. They were given permission to perform a single musical piece each, however, the other bands weren't prepared to perform an hour of music as was the Banda Birżebbuġa.

The Audience was being held in Saint Peter's Square and not Paolo VI Hall because of the number of people. It also happened three days after Easter, and the church stairs were still decorated with yellow flowers which created a beautiful ambience. Around 10:30, the Popemobile could be seen approaching the audience to great applause. His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI opened the audience with a speech and prayer, with the Cardinals naming their respective groups. When the English-speaking group was mentioned, Caruana had planned with Mro. Bugelli to perform a piece of the Inno di Gloria Tu Es Petrus. When the Cardinal named the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuga, the group applauded and the Banda Birżebbuga together with the Xmun Pietru Choir started performing the part of the hymn with the lyrics 'Tu Es Petrus'; a worthy recognition to Pope Benedict XVI as the successor of Saint Peter the Apostle. The Audience was approaching its end and the bands were to perform a piece each as the Pope toured the square. Alexander Caruana had reached an agreement with the administration of the other bands, such that the latter perform whilst the Pope was greeting the special guests, and for the Banda Birżebbuga to perform whilst the Pope was going down the stairs; performing the marching hymn Ragħaj tal-Knisja. Pope Benedict XVI asked his driver to stop the car so that he could greet the Banda Birżebbuga and the Maltese contingent.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE GENERAL AUDIENCE

The band's performance had been successful, so much so that the journal *Osservatore Romano* published an article applauding the Banda Birżebbuġa's participation also mentioning the other services which it had done in Rome. The Central Committee had also given Fr. Patrick Incorvaja a big frame with a photo of the titular statue of Saint Peter in Birżebbuġa who had passed it on to Pope Benedict XVI as a gift from the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa. The frame was hung in the Papal Palace. On Thursday the 7th of April, the Central Committee and other members of the band club had a courtesy meeting with the Maltese ambassador for Italy, His Excellency Walter Balzan, and his staff at the Maltese Embassy. The Ambassador mentioned the aforementioned article as well as other comments that had been made on the Banda Birżebbuġa. The trip to Rome ended the following day, when on Friday evening the whole contingent left for Fiumicino airport to return to Malta, where numerous members and supporters were awaiting its return at the Malta International Airport.

THE URN WITH THE CHAINS

A few days later, Alexander Caruana spoke to the Parish Priest Fr. Nikol Pace about the rector of the Basilica of San Pietro in Vincoli's promise to send a copy of Saint Peter's chains for these to be exhibited in the Birżebbuġa Parish Church and the rector's wish to

visit Malta and the Birżebbuġa Parish PrieSt The Parish Priest asked Caruana to remain in contact with the rector.

After about 3 months, Fr. Bruno informed Alexander Caruana that he had ordered a set of chains from a metalworker. Caruana was to visit Rome in September and asked Fr. Bruno if he could collect the chains himself during the trip. Fr. Bruno informed him that he had given the chains to another parish however he had ordered a new set for the Birżebbuga parish. Alexander visited him regardless and reminded him about the chains, with Fr. Bruno informing him that the metalworker still hadn't started working on them. A while later, he informed Caruana that the metalworker had stopped working due to illness and that he was going to find another metalworker. Around December 2012, Alexander asked Fr. Bruno to do his utmost for the chains to be in Birżebbuga in time for the 2013 feast, for the occasion of the first centenary from the establishment of the Birżebbuga parish. A metalworker was found in January 2013, however, Fr. Bruno had in the meantime been given work to do in Brazil. Caruana was prepared to travel to Rome and pick them up himself or otherwise ask Fr. Patrick Incorvaja or Fr. Daniel Farrugia, a new priest from Birżebbuga who had started working in Rome in 2012, to collect them, however Fr. Bruno informed him that he would manage to send them. The chains were sent with DHL on the day before Alexander was to leave for Rome. Fr. Bruno still wanted to visit Malta and to see the copy of the chains in Birżebbuġa.

After showing them to Parish Priest, Fr. Nikol Pace, Alexander Caruana expressed the wish for the chains to be blessed by Pope Benedict XVI. Alexander Caruana expressed his wish to Fr. Patrick Incorvaja and the copy was once again sent to Rome with another prieSt In the meantime, Fr. Incorvaja had been appointed a Monsignor in the Vatican.

At the start of February 2013, Pope Benedict XVI, who had visited the Maltese islands a few days after the band club's trip to Rome, announced his resignation due to health problems. Mgr. Incorvaja did his utmost for the Pope to bless them and in fact, the copy was blessed by Pope Benedict XVI on the 28th of February 2013, the last day of his Pontificate. The chains were sent back to Alexander Caruana along with a certificate to verify that they had been blessed by Pope Benedict XVI on the 28th of February 2013. An urn was made for these chains, designed by Alexander Caruana, manufactured by carpenter Joseph Caruana and gilded by Philip Carabott, with all the work being done voluntarily. The expenses related to material were paid by the Birżebbuġa Local Council and the chains were inaugurated on Thursday the 1st of August 2013, the 2nd day of the titular feast's Tridum. The urn was inaugurated by Maltese bishop, His Excellency Mgr. Silvestru Magro, and they were placed in front of Saint Peter Apostle's niche, in the Birżebbuġa parish church.⁴

⁴ If not stated otherwise, all information was found in the annual pubblicaton *Minn Qalb I-Iljuni* (2010) and from an interview with Alexander Caruana and Roderick Cachia, two persons who strived so that the trip to Rome could be done.

CONCLUSION

Despite the trip lasting just a week and all that remains are the beautiful memories in the minds and hearts of the contingent, all the Birżebbuġa locals benefited from this trip with the acquisition of a copy of Saint Peter Apostle's chains, a loyal copy of the chains which are found under the principal altar in the basilica of Saint Peter in Vincoli in Rome, where the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa had the privilege of exhibiting a vocal and instrumental academy, which had helped the band club's musical acumen to be appreciated abroad and to kindle the devotion and love for its locality's patron saint, Saint Peter Apostle.

Hall.

The annual concert 'Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri' for the 20th anniversary.



20 Anniversarju 1990 - 2010

Moments from the concert 'Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri' in the Primary School

The booklet for the concert in 2010.





Sočjeta' Filarmonika San Pietru Banda Biržebbuja A.D. 1990

Programm Vokali u Strumentali 'Mill-Bandisti ghall-Membri' 2010 Correspondence with Fr. Patrick Incorvaja about the trip to Rome.

Patrick Incorvaja

Supremum Signaturae Apostolicae Tribunal
Palazzo della Cancelleria, Piazza Cancelleria 1, 00120 Città del Vaticano
+39 06 698 87 512 - pincorvaja@yahoo.com

Via di Porta Angelica 31, 00193 Roma +39 06 688 91 739



VICARIATO
DELLA
CITTÀ DEL VATICANO

N. 189 V/10/2

Vaticano, 25 febbraio 2010

Reverendo Signore,

in merito alla Sua cortese richiesta mi premuro di confermare, che la Signoria Vostra potrà celebrare l'Eucaristia, per un gruppo di circa ottanta pellegrini maltesi, all'altare della Cappella del Coro, nella Basilica Papale di San Pietro, il martedi 6 aprile p.v., alle ore 08.00.

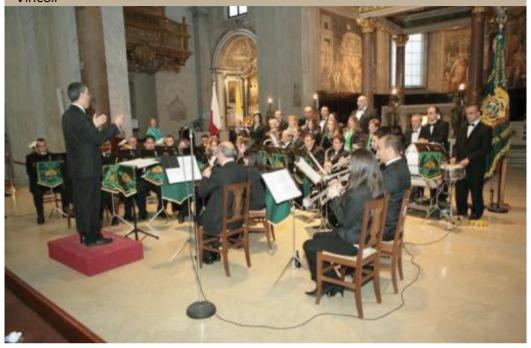
La corale della Società Filarmonica della Parrocchia di San Pietro Apostolo, in Malta, potrà animare con il canto la celebrazione suddetta.

Mentre mi permetto di raccomandare l'osservanza della massima puntualità, mi valgo volentieri della circostanza per porgerLe il mio ossequio cordiale

devotissimo in XP

Angelo Card. Comastri
Atciprete della Basilica Papale di San Pietro
Vicazio Generale di Sua Santità
per la Città del Vaticano

The Academy held by the Banda Birżebbuġa in the Basilica of San Pietro in Vincoli



The Xmun Pietru Choir in the Basilica of San Pietro in Vincoli



The Banda Birżebbuġa in St Peter's Square in the Vatican City.



The Banda Birżebbuġa in Piazza di Spagna after the concert in Piazza Mignanelli



The Banda Birżebbuġa in the Basilica of San Pietro in Vincoli



The Banda Birżebbuġa after the vocal and instrumental concert in the Basilica of San Pietro in Vincoli.



Holy Mass in the Basilica of St Peter in the Vatican City, with the participation of the Xmun Pietru Choir.



The main Flag of Honour of the Banda Birżebbuġa infront of the Basilica of St Peter in the Vatican City.

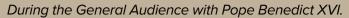


The three Flags in St Peter's Square in the Vatican City.



Part of those who attended for the concert by the Banda Birżebbuġa in Piazza Mignanelli







Mro Michael Bugelli directing the Banda Birżebbuġa during the General Audience with Pope Benedict XVI.



Part of the Banda Birżebbuġa and the Xmun Pietru choir in the Vatican City.



The inauguration of the new emblem of the Sezzjoni Żgħażagħ Iljuni in 2010.



The emblem of the Sezzjoni Żgħażagħ Iljuni



The blessing of the emblem of the Sezzjoni Żgħażagħ Iljuni from Parish Priest Fr. Nikol Pace



The offricial poster for the exhibition organised by the Youth Section in 2010.



Moments from the Holy Week reenactment.

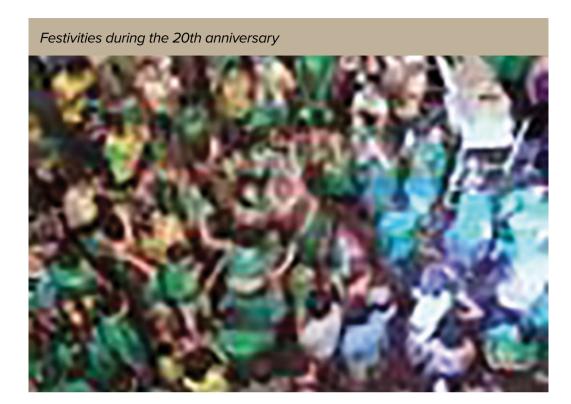


Another moment from the 2010 Holy Week re-enactment.



The procession with the titular statue.





Festivities on the parvis in 2010 during the march for when the statue is taken out of the niche.



The statue on the church parvis in 2010.



An aerial view of those who were present on the church parvis welcoming the titular statue of Saint Peter.



The statue of St Peter and the Banda Birżebbuġa with the main Flag of Honour.







The statue of St Peter, property of the band club, during the demonstation on the boat.



Feast t-shirts exhibited during the 20th Anniversary exhibition.



The arrival of the statue of St Peter by boat and the start of the festive march.



The march by the Banda Birżebbuġa before the concert for the titular feaSt



The march with the statue of St Peter, property of the band club.

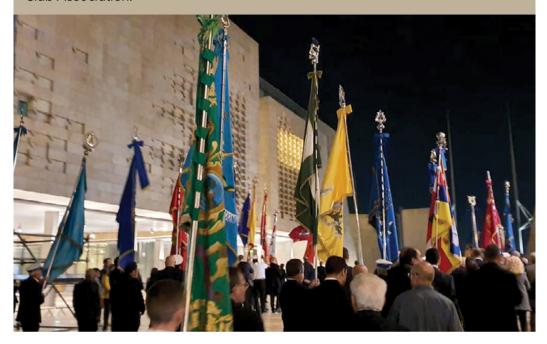


The concert held on the eve of the titular feast commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Band Club.





Moments from the march for the feast of St Cecilia organised by the Malta Band Club Association.



The Flag of Honour of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa together with other band club's flags of honour for the feast of St Cecilia in Valletta.



TOWARDS THE SILVER JUBILEE

ince everything went well during the celebrations of the 20th Anniversary from the establishment of the Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, the Central Committee, the Sections as well as the members, benefactors and supporters started thinking about the year 2015, the year during which the 25th Anniversary was going to be celebrated.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2011

President Jason Vella was assisted by Sue Pace. Newly elected Secretary General Robert Baldacchino was assisted by Clare Baldacchino, and Treasurer Walter Pace was assisted by Stephanie Buhagiar. Andy Mifsud was the new Public Relations Officer, Benji Caruana was the Director General assisted by Louis Buhagiar while the Assistant Director responsible for the decorations of the facade of the premises was Angelo Cutajar. Emanuel Ebejer was the Assistant Director for the decorations during the external activities, Sue Pace and Rita Agius were responsible for the organisation of social activities whilst Christopher Camilleri was a member.¹

RENTING OUT THE HALL AND MORE WORK

The main hall of the Band Club, since it was big and accessible, was being rented out for various activities like Yoga and Aerobics.² A group of volunteers took the initiative to carry out maintenance works on the drainage system.³ Alexander Caruana and Simon Micallef prepared

¹ Minutes 2011, Meeting 1, 5 th October 2010

² Minutes 2011, Meeting 1, 5 th October 2010

³ Minutes 2011, Meeting 1, 5 th October 2010

the script for the Holy Week exhibition⁴ that was going to be held between the 17th and 22nd of April 2011.⁵

CHRISTMAS 2010

The friendly relationship between the two local band clubs kept getting stronger during the new decade. In fact, on the 27th of October 2010, the two bands performed together during an activity organised by the Local Council,⁶ in a mass during the Novena, and organised a march together playing Christmas carols along the streets of Birżebbuġa.⁷

A NEW FLAG

A new painted flag was ordered from Silvio from Ghaxaq.8

TWINNING AGREEMENT

In 2011, Banda Birżebbuġa participated in a twinning agreement between the Birżebbuġa Local Council and the locality of Porta San Giorgio starting in November 2010.9 The annual concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* was planned to be held on the 26th of February 2011. An excursion to Agrigento between the 9th and 13th of September 2011 was also planned However, due to various reasons, a one-day excursion was held instead of a four-day excursion to Sicily was held on the 26th of June 2011 while an excursion to Gozo was organised on the 4th of July.¹¹

THE GHAQDA TAN-NAR 22 TA' FRAR

From this year, Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar started using the facilities of the fireworks complex of Madonna taċ-Ċintura in Gudja, instead of those of San Pawl in Ħal Safi. ¹²

NOSTALGIJA

In Independence Garden, which is found in Republic Square, an activity named *Nostalgija* was planned to be held. A two-day activity was held, on the 28th and 29th of May 2011, for which various artists and new talents were invited. These included Renato, il-Majsi, Domenique, id-Dulli and the Greenfields.¹³ The local football club, StPeter's, expressed the wish for both band clubs to send some of their musicians to play at the football ground during important matches to support the team ¹⁴

- 4 Minutes 2011, Meeting 9, 3 rd March 2011
- 5 Minutes 2011, Meeting 9, 3 rd March 2011
- 6 Minutes 2011, Meeting 3, 3 rd November 2010
- 7 Minutes 2011, Meeting 3, 3 rd November 2010
- 8 Minutes 2011, Meeting 4, 22 nd November 2010
- 9 Minutes 2011, Meeting 12, 17 th May 2011
- 10 Minutes 2011, Meeting 12, 17 th May 2011
- 11 Minutes 2011, Meeting 12, 17 th May 2011
- 12 Minutes 2011, Meeting 12, 17 th May 2011
- 13 Minutes 2011, Meeting 12, 17 th May 2011
- 14 Minutes 2011, Meeting 12, 17 th May 2011

RESTORATION WORKS ON THE STATUE OF SAINT PETER

There was the need to have some restoration works done on the statue of Saint Peter, property of the band club. Once again Chevalier Camilleri Cauchi, who back in 1991 had created this masterpiece, was contacted.¹⁵ The bandstand also needed restoration.¹⁶

WORKS ON THE BAR

The bar of the premises was renovated and a *Lejla Sajfija* was organised the Saturday before the feast week. For this occasion, a talent show was organised.¹⁷ All this was possible thanks also to the many sponsors that decided to offer their help.¹⁸

CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2012

The administrative year 2012 saw quite a good number of role changes, involving multiple youths, in the Central Committee. President Jason Vella was assisted by Henry Bonnici, Secretary Johan Briffa was assisted by Eman Farrugia, whilst Treasurer Robert Baldacchino was assisted by Giovanna Naudi. Jonathan Bonnici was the Public Relations Officer, Andy Mifsud was the Archivist, Benji Caruana was the Director for Decorations, Emanuel Ebejer was the Co-ordinator of Social Activities, Louis Marsh and Steve Briffa were the Directors for Maintenance, and Clare Baldacchino was the band delegate. Later on Emanuel Ebejer resgined and Rita Agius was co-opted. Later on Emanuel Ebejer resgined and Rita Agius was co-opted.

THE CURIA DOCUMENT

The Archbishop's Curia published a consultation document for better management of feast celebrations (Nirrestawraw il-Festi Flimkien). This document raised a lot of discussions and hence the band clubs were given the opportunity to have their say and vote.²² The Malta Band Club Association informed its members that a task force was going to be set up to discuss matters with the Ecclesiastic authorities.²³

FIREWORKS COURSE

Members of the band club who formed part of the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar and had a licence in manufacturing fireworks attended a course organised by the Kirkop Local Council.²⁴ In 2012, Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar participated in the Ground Fireworks Festival that is held each year on the eve of the feast of St Publius at The Granaries in Floriana.²⁵

- 15 Minutes 2011, Meeting 17, 16 th August 2011
- 16 Minutes 2011, Meeting 17, 16 th August 2011
- 17 Minutes 2011, Meeting 15, 12 th July 2011
- 18 Minutes 2011, Meeting 15, 12 th July 2011
- 19 Minutes 2012, Meeting 16 th April 2012
- 20 Minutes 2012, Meeting 16 th April 2012
- 21 Minutes 2012, Meeting 16 th April 2012
- 22 Minutes 2012, Meeting 4 th October 2012
- 23 Minutes 2012, Meeting 4 th October 2012
- 24 Minutes 2012, Meeting 27 th March 2012
- 25 Minutes 2012, Meeting 27 th March 2012

ACTIVITY AT MONTEKRISTO

Between the 25th and 27th of November 2011, the Flag of Honour of the band club was exhibited at Montekristo Estate in Luqa, during an exhibition about traditional Maltese feasts.

The main hall of the band club needed maintenance work. At the same time it was decided to convert the recordings of the Banda Birżebbuġa from cassette tapes to compact discs.²⁶

THE PARISH FIRST CENTENARY

The Central Committee began discussions about what activities could be organised by the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa in 2013, the year in which Birżebbuġa was going to celebrate its first Centenary as a Parish. The first idea was that of presenting an academy at the parish church.²⁷

The Central Committee applied for a scheme from the Central Government to get funds to teach music and to put on a theatrical production during the 2012 Holy Week.²⁸

FEDERATION OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

President Jason Vella attended a meeting organised by the Federation of Voluntary Organisations during which it was decided that the federation was to have an emblem so that all the members could use it and be recognised as a voluntary organisation.²⁹

PRIESTLY ANNIVERSARY

Fr. Vincenz Deguara, Fr. Ġużepp Berry and Fr Alfred Micallef, who were either priests from Birżebbuġa or offered their services in Birżebbuġa celebrated their Gold Jubilee. Representatives from the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa were invited for a holy mass to celebrate this event and as per usual, the band club presented mementoes to the three priests.³⁰

COLLABORATING WITH THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

On the 7th of May 2012, a delegation from the Band Club visited the Birżebbuġa Primary School and had a meeting with the students during which they explained the benefits of learning a musical instrument. On the 18th of May 2012, it was the students' turn to come to the premises for a tour and participate in various workshops that were organised by Assistant Musical Director Charles Wallace Suda and local musician Stephanie Buhagiar.³¹

²⁶ Minutes 2012, Meeting 2, 8 th November 2011

²⁷ Minutes 2012, Meeting 26 th January 2012

²⁸ Minutes 2012, Meeting 26 th January 2012

²⁹ Minutes 2012, Meeting 27 th March 2012

³⁰ Minutes 2012, Meeting 16 th April 2012

³¹ ibid.

A CONTRACT WITH AGENZIJA ŻGĦAŻAGĦ

The Central Committee of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa signed a contract with Aġenzija Żgħażagħ to receive €1,800 in funds to be used to teach music.

In the meantime three activities were organised; a day trip to Sicily on the 19th of May, a day trip to Gozo on the 6th of June and a Pasta Night two days later.³²

JUM BIRŻEBBUĠA

After the titular feast, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was offered a stand and participated in the activities for *Jum Birżebbuġa* organised by the Local Council.³³ Discussions on how to improve the titular feast continued, mainly on how to limit the speeches on the church parvis during the ceremony when the statue is taken out of the niche.³⁴ In the meantime, a problem with the drainage works in the courtyard of the premises was fixed with the help of the members and other volunteers.³⁵

CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2013

2013 was a very important year for the Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa and all Birżebbuġa. On the 9th of September, the Birżebbuga Parish was going to celebrate its first centenary. Therefore, during the last months of 2012, a lot of preparations began for this occasion.

Jason Vella was re-elected President and was assisted by Louis Buhagiar. Henry Bonnici was the new Secretary General and was assisted by Clare Baldacchino, who was also the Band Delegate. Robert Baldacchino was the new Treasurer assisted by Rita Agius, who was also responsible for the social activities. Andy Mifsud was the website administrator, while Eman Farrugia was the representative of the Fireworks Section. Steve Briffa was the Director for Maintenance, Benji Caruana was the Director of the Decorations Commission, and Angelo Cutajar, Christopher Camilleri, Chris Cutrone, Jonathan Bonnici and Josef Marsh were elected as members of the Committee.³⁶

MORE WORK

An application with the *Good Causes Fund* was made, to benefit from €21,000 used to make the sanitary services in the upper level of the band club accessible even to persons with special needs, for restoration works in the main hall, to improve the drainage system and to repaint the walls. Alexander Caruana suggested doing renovation works on the bandstand too. There was also the suggestion to have some secondary flags that could be raised for various occasions and feasts throughout the year on the flagpoles of the band club.

- 32 Minutes 2012, Meeting 10 th May 2012
- 33 Minutes 2012, Meeting 12 th September 2012
- 34 Minutes 2012, Meeting 12 th September 2012
- 35 Minutes 2012, Meeting 12 th September 2012
- 36 Minutes 2013, Meeting 1, 20 th October 2012

CHRISTMAS 2012

The Birżebbuġa Local Council asked the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa to decorate Birżebbuġa Street once again.³⁷ On the 20th of December, the Banda Birżebbuġa together with the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen participated in the mass for the Novena.³⁸

THE WORKS ON THE MAIN HALL

The first project for the administrative year 2013 was that of the main hall. The tiles were changed and new gypsum works were done. All works were supervised by architect Michael Schembri, Honorary President of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birebbuġa.³⁹ A designer also checked the work and gave advise so that the works of the main hall were done professionally.⁴⁰

THEATRICAL ACTIVITIES

After lacking for several years, a theatrical production was presented. On the 20th of January 2013, the Youth Section presented a comedy that was well acclaimed by members and supporters⁴¹ and asked for more activities of that nature. Therefore a second comedy was presented on the 13th and 14th of April 2013.⁴²

THE FIRST CENTENARY AS A PARISH

Toward the end of 2012, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa together with the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen began discussing with the Parish Priest Fr. Nikol Pace and the Centenary Committee on how the two band clubs would be collaborating with the parish in the activities that were going to be organised. The plans were to present an academy at the parish church and participate in the procession with the statue of Our Lady of Sorrows, the first patron saint of Birżebbuġa, that was planned to be held on its liturgical day, on Sunday the 15th of September 2013.⁴³

On the 9th of September 2013, exactly the day on which Birżebbuġa became a parish a hundred years prior, Archbishop Mgr. Pawl Cremona O.P. concelebrated a Solemn Pontifical Mass. Afterwards during a social activity outside the church, in which both band clubs participated as a massed band, a commemorative plaque was uncovered. A procession with the statue of Our Lady of Sorrows along the street of Birżebbuġa ensued afterwards. Both band clubs participated in the procession, which also passed in front of the old parish

³⁷ Minutes 2013, Meeting 5, 22 nd January 2013

³⁸ Minutes 2013, Meeting 3, 22 nd November 2012

³⁹ Minutes 2013, Meeting 5, 22 nd January 2013

⁴⁰ Minutes 2013, Meeting 5, 22 nd January 2013

⁴¹ Minutes 2013, Meeting 5, 22 nd January 2013

⁴² Minutes 2013, Meeting 5, 22 nd January 2013

⁴³ Minutes 2013, Meeting 5, 22 nd January 2013

church. On the 14th of May 2013, a special mass was celebrated to solemnly commemorate the anniversary of the Consecration of the Parish Church, which happened on the 14th of May 1977. The Birżebbuga Parish Church was the first one to be consecrated by Mgr. Ġużeppi Mercieca a few days after he became Archbishop of Malta. He was therefore invited to celebrate this mass. Representatives from the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa were also present for this occassion.⁴⁴

A group of Birżebbuġa locals formed the Commission for the Centenary Exhibition and the exhibition was held between the 8th and 15th of September 2013, exhibiting many items and information related to the Birżebbuġa Parish, especially about Our Lady of Sorrows and Saint Peter the Apostle. Among the volunteers and organisations that participated in this exhibition, there was also the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa who participated as a philharmonic, cultural and social group.⁴⁵

Toward the end of October 2013, the Parish organised an academy in which both band clubs performed together under the direction of both Musical Directors, Mro Michael Bugelli and Mro Vincent Bonnici, with the participation of the parish choir directed by Mro Felicienne Paris.⁴⁶ This academy was under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Malta, His Excellency Dr George Abela.

ACTIVITIES WITH AGENZIJA ŻGĦAŻAGĦ

The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa decided to participate in an activity at the University of Malta organised by Aġenzija Żgħażagħ on the 18th of February 2013. A stand was prepared to show photos of what activities and purchases had been made possible thanks to the funds given by this entity. Local musicians between the ages of thirteen and thirty years participated in a seven-minute musical exhibition.⁴⁷ The annual concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* was held on the 23rd of February 2013, and the Carnival Ball was held on the 8th of February 2013.⁴⁸

THE CENACLE EXHIBITION

During Holy Week, a concert of funeral marches was organised ⁴⁹ while, a re-enactment of he Cenacle was exhibited in the shed near the band club.⁵⁰ On Easter Sunday a social activity was held. This consisted of a lunch for all the members, supporters and friends. Other activities organised include a day trip to Comino, a day trip to Sicily, and the traditional post-feast *xalata*.⁵¹

- 44 Minutes 2013, Meeting 5, 22 nd January 2013
- 45 Minutes 2013, Meeting 5, 22 nd January 2013
- 46 Minutes 2013, Meeting 5, 22 nd January 2013
- 47 Minutes 2013, Meeting 5, 22 nd January 2013
- 48 ibid.
- 49 ibid.
- 50 ibid.
- 51 Minutes 2013, Meeting 6, 31 st January 2013

AN EXHIBITION OF STATUES AND NOSTALĠIJA

During this centenary year, an exhibition of titular statues was organised at the premises of the band club after the Easter festivities.⁵² In June the activity *Nostalgija* was held again in Independence Garden in Republic Square, followed by a *Lejla Sajfija* some days before the titular feast for St Peter.⁵³

FESTA ĠELAT

The Central Committee, thanks to the help of the various sections, members and supporters organised *Festa Ġelat* (Ice-Cream Festival), in collaboration with the Birżebbuġa Local Council.⁵⁴ During this activity, in aid of the Puttinu Cares Foundation, there were many food stalls and talent shows with the participation of *Ġorġ u Pawlu* and John Muscat.⁵⁵ A national record was established too, that of the longest ice cream,⁵⁶ with help from Tony Muscat Confectionery.⁵⁷

CENTENARY OF THE EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

The first Eucharistic Congress in Malta was formed in 1913. To commemorate this anniversary, a holy mass was concelebrated at the St John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta for which the Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was invited.⁵⁸

SILVER JUBILEE OF THE PARISH PRIEST

In 2013 the Parish Priest Fr Nikol Pace celebrated his Silver Jubilee as a prieSt The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was invited and attended the thanksgiving mass celebrated on Sunday 14th July 2013 in Birżebbuġa.⁵⁹

A NEW PARISH PRIEST

On the 8th of May, there were rumours that the Archbishop of Malta, Mgr. Pawl Cremona O.P. was going to appoint Fr. Nikol Pace as Parish Priest of St Catherine's parish church in Żejtun. This meant that those were to be the last few months for Fr. Nikol Pace, after thirteen years of service in Birżebbuġa. He will surely be remembered for bringing the two band clubs of Birżebbuġa to work together and cooperate since a very good relationship had been built between them thanks to him. On the 11th of August 2013, a week after the titular feast, a thanksgiving mass was celebrated, and as usual, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was present for this occasion.⁶⁰

- 52 ibid.
- 53 Minutes 2013, Meeting 9, 3 rd April 2013
- 54 Minutes 2013, Meeting 9, 3 rd April 2013
- 55 Minutes 2013, Meeting 9, 3 rd April 2013
- 56 Minutes 2013, Meeting 11, not dated
- 57 Interview with President Alexander Caruana
- 58 Minutes 2013, Meeting 11, not dated
- 59 As the author remembers it
- 60 ibid.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2014

In 2014 there was a change in the presidency. Emanuel Zammit became the new President and he was assisted by Raymond Cutajar. Secretary Henry Bonnici was assisted by Roderick Cachia whilst Andy Mifsud had the role of website administrator. Walter Pace was once again the Treasurer assisted by Benji Caruana, Eman Farrugia and Christopher Camilleri. Angelo Cutajar was the Director for Maintenance assisted by Benny Camilleri. Emanuel Ebejer was the Director for Decorations while Josef Schembri was the Public Relations Officer. Along the year Derek Mifsud Speranza was elected as Consultant for EU applications whilst ex-President and ex-Secretary General, Jason Vella and Robert Baldacchino respectively, were elected Financial Consultants. Towards the end of 2013, David Abdilla was co-opted since Emanuel Ebejer gave his resignation.

FR. BRIAN GIALANZE AND FR. NIKOL PACE

In November 2013, a representative from the Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was invited to share the joy in the occasion with a youth from Birżebbuġa, Fr. Brian Gialanze, during his deacon ordination ceremony. Ex-Parish Priest of Birżebbuġa, Fr. Nikol Pace invited a representative of the band club for his first solemn mass as Parish Priest of Żejtun during which he was conferred the office of Parish PrieSt On the 10th of August 2014, the two band clubs participated again as a massed band for the first solemn mass by Fr. Brian Gialanze. Ef

A NEW PARISH PRIEST FOR BIRŻEBBUĠA

In June 2013, the Archbishop chose Can. Fr. Anton Galea-Scannura, a priest from Valletta who used to live in Birżebbuġa, as the new Parish PrieSt In fact, in 1999, he had celebrated his first solemn mass in Birżebbuġa. On Sunday the 10th of November 2013, Auxiliary Archbishop. Mgr. Charles J. Scicluna concelebrated the mass to herald the start of the pastoral work and conferred the office of Parish Priest on Can. Anton Galea-Scannura. Before the mass, both band clubs organised a march around the streets of Birżebbuġa, welcomed the new Parish Priest near his family residence and accompanied him towards the parish church.⁶⁷

25TH ANNIVERSARY COMMISSION

To celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuga professionally, a Commission was established. Members of this Commission included expresidents and members of the band club who had helped and worked with the band

- 61 Minutes 2014, Meeting 5, 29 th December 2013
- 62 Minutes 2014, Meeting 5, 29 th December 2013
- 63 Minutes 2014, Meeting 5, 29 th December 2013
- 64 Minutes 2014, Meeting 5, 29 th December 2013
- Minutes 2014, Meeting 5, 29 th December 2013
- 66 Minutes 2014, Meeting 4, 18 th December 2013
- 67 Minutes 2014, Meeting 1, 5 th November 2013 and as the author remembers it.

club for various years. These were Anthony Camilleri, Jason Vella, Alex Azzopardi, Simon Micallef and Emanuel Mangion.⁶⁸ Later, Johan Briffa, Mario Sant⁶⁹ and Tarcisio Bongailas joined too.⁷⁰ Peter Cassar took Mario Sant's place after some time.⁷¹

A NEW STATUTE

Although the statute of the band club, was always kept updated with various amendments, there was the need for a change in the content. President Emanuel Zammit contacted Judge Dr Joseph Azzopardi to help and advise the band club in updating the statute.⁷²

FR FRANS SCHEMBRI CELEBRATIONS

To celebrate Fr. Frans Schembri's 90 years of age and 65th anniversary as a priest, Parish Priest Can. Anton Galea-Scannura contacted the two band clubs so that in May they accompany Fr. Frans Schembri with a march along the streets of Birżebbuġa before a solemn mass was celebrated to celebrate the two anniversaries.⁷³

PROJECTS

In 2014, the Central Committee received funds from the *Good Causes Fund* and *Gal Xlokk* so that the handrail in the main hall could be manufactured.⁷⁴

A NEW PRESIDENT

After some months as President, Emanuel Zammit presented a letter of resignation as president and member of the Central Committee after an incident since he had felt ridiculed. After an extraordinary General Meeting on the 30th of March, there was only one nominee, and so Alexander Caruana was elected the fifth President of the Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa. This new presidency brought also some changes in the Central Committee. Andy Mifsud became the new Vice-President, Eman Farrugia became the new Assistant Secretary and Benji Caruana became the new Assistant Treasurer.

EMBELLISHING THE ENTRANCE HALL

The Central Committee decided to put three marble plaques in the entrance hall, one with the names of the five founders, another one with the names of the presidents and the other one with the names of the Musical Directors of the band club.⁷⁷ Embellishment plans for the entrance hall were also made and Architect Michael Schembri, Jason Vella, Alexander

- 68 Minutes 2014, Meeting 7, 27 th January 2014
- 69 Minutes 2014, Meeting 7, 27 th January 2014
- 70 Minutes 2014, Meeting 7, 27 th January 2014
- 71 Minutes 2014, Meeting 7, 27 th January 2014
- 72 Minutes 2014, Meeting 6, 13 th January 2014
- 73 Minutes 2014, Meeting 7, 27 th January 2014
- 74 Minutes 2014, Meeting 8, 12 th February 2014
- 75 Minutes 2014, Meeting 11, 8 th April 2014
- 76 Minutes 2014, Meeting 11, 8 th April 2014
- 77 Minutes 2014, Meeting 11, 8 th April 2014

Caruana, Walter Pace and Victor Schembri⁷⁸ were consulted for these works. However, these plans were left on the shelf since another big project took priority; that of investing in a new property in the village's main square.⁷⁹

AN INVITATION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA

Since an academy was going to be presented in the parish church on the 21st of February 2015, the Central Committee sent an early invitation to the President of the Republic of Malta, H.E. Marie Louise Coleiro Preca to attend this event.⁸⁰ On the 14th of January 2015, the day commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, a mass was celebrated with the participation of the Banda Birżebbuga.⁸¹

FESTA GELAT 2014

With the help of many members, supporters and volunteers, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa organised *Festa Ġelat* on two days, 16th and 17th AuguSt⁸² Federica Falzon, Gaia, Big Band Brothers and other local and national talents were invited to participate in this event.⁸³ The activity served also to collect funds and donations that were given to *Fondazzjoni Qalb it-Tfal*.

During the same period, the band club also participated in *Festa Komunita* which was held at St Benedict's College and in an activity organised by *Malta Records* in Qormi.⁸⁴ The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa exhibited its flags of honour during another exhibition organised by the *Societa Filarmonica La Valette* in its premises in Valletta to commemorate its 140th anniversary.⁸⁵

25TH ANNIVERSARY SONG

Poet Joe Julian Farrugia was commissioned to write the lyrics of the song commemorating the 25th anniversary of the band club.⁸⁶ The music was composed by Elton Zarb and was performed for the first time at the end of the morning festive march on the day of the titular feaSt⁸⁷

THE STATUE OF SAINT PETER IN VALLETTA

An invitation was received for the statue of St Peter apostle, property of the band club, to participate in an exhibition at the Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Valletta during

- 78 Interview with President Alexander Caruana
- 79 Interview with President Alexander Caruana
- 80 Minutes 2014, Meeting 13, 7 th May 2014
- 81 Minutes 2014, Meeting 13, 7 th May 2014
- 82 Minutes 2014, Meeting 21, 9 th August 2014
- 83 Minutes 2014, Meeting 21, 9 th August 2014
- 84 Minutes 2014, Meeting 21, 9 th August 2014
- 85 Minutes 2014, Meeting 21, 9 th August 2014
- 86 Minutes 2014, Meeting 21, 9 th August 2014
- 87 Minutes 2014, Meeting 21, 9 th August 2014

the Notte Bianca.88

ANNIVERSARY PLANS

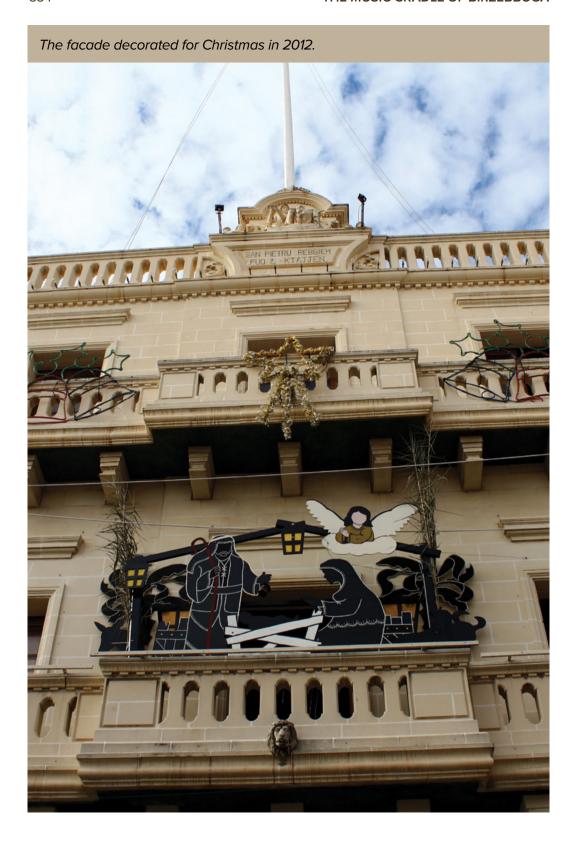
As part of the celebrations for the Silver Jubilee of the Societa Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuga, apart from a mass in January and the musical Academy, an exhibition about the history of the band club was planned to be held in March in the Anthony Camilleri Main Hall. In April, a dinner was planned to commemorate all the presidents of the band club. In May a music concert was planned to be held at the Primary School Hall, whilst a band performed at the Greek Theatre at Pretty Bay in June. Apart from special celebrations during the feast week and before, a trip to Germany was also planned. An exhibition about hobbies was planned in October whilst in November the Banda Birżebbuga planned to perform during a march and musical concert in Valletta. On the 31st of December 2015, a cocktail party was planned. The representations of the years 1990 and 2015 that were attached to the facade of the band club were switched off to symbolically end the anniversary celebrations.89 However, some of the planned events were not held to have enough funds to acquire a new property in Misraħ il-Knisja.

CONCLUSION

Everything was ready so that the Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuga could celebrate its 25th Anniversary. It started with an idea from two youths on a bus and now it was going to celebrate 25 years from its establishment. It was destiny which evolved from an idea to a concept in writing to a reality; the Banda Birżebbuga, Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, from a dream to a successful story.

The Banda Birżebbuġa in Floriana for the occasion of St Patricks' Day.





The emblem of the Kummissjoni Armar Estern.



A delegation from the Central Committee attending a seminar.





Banda Birżebbuġa during the feast of Christ the King in Paola.



The 4 Presidents Anthony Camilleri, Simon Micallef, Jason Vella and Alexander Caruana with the bust of President Anthony Camilleri sculpted by Joe Caruana.





Presentation of the certificate by Malta Records for the longest ice-cream.



Soprano Marthese Grech and Tenor Johan Briffa accompanied by the Banda Birżebbuġa during one of the concerts on the eve of the titular feaSt



The emblem of the Grupp Teatrali 14 ta' Jannar.







Nostalģija in May 2011.



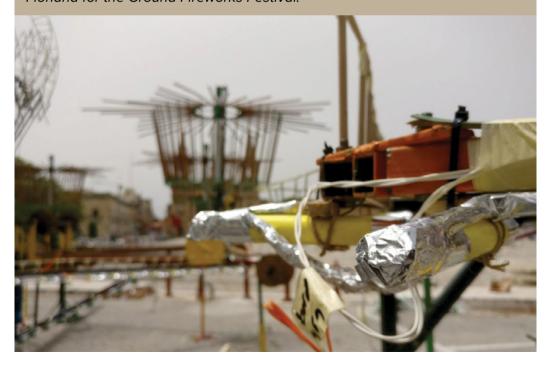
The statue of St Peter on the pedestal.

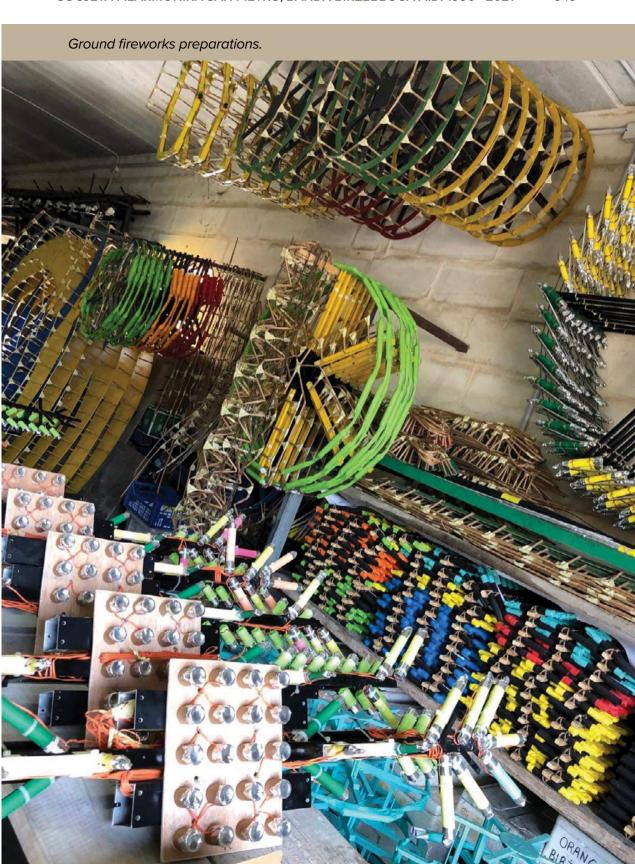


The emblem of the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar



The Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar representing Birżebbuġa at The Granaries in Floriana for the Ground Fireworks Festival.





One of the mechanical ground fireworks produced by the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar.



Fireworks for the 100th anniversary of the Parish Church in 2013.





One of the exhibitions about St Peter the Apostle organised by the band club.



Boats accompanying the statue of St Peter.

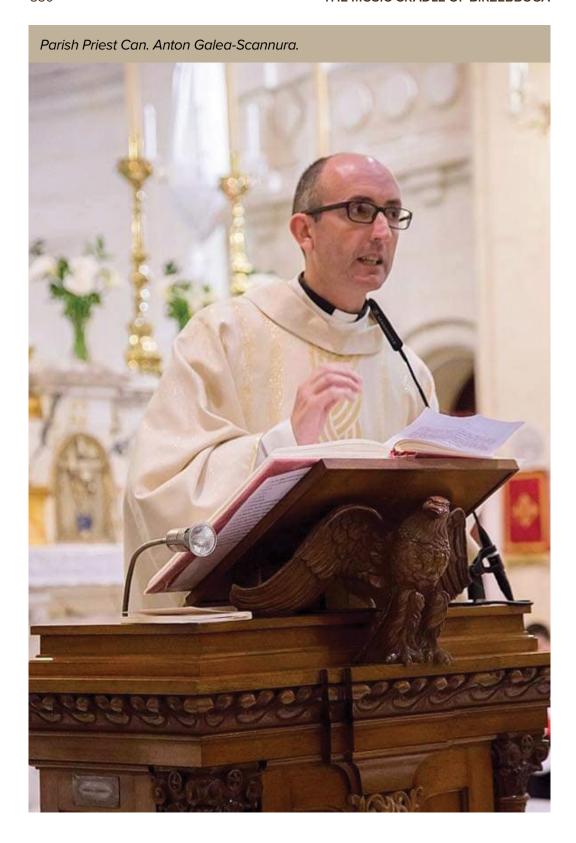


The Banda Birżebbuġa at the feast of Stella Maris in Sliema.



The Banda Birżebbuġa and the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen performing together on the 9th of September 2013.





The march in front of the old parish church before the holy mass during which Can. Anton Galea-Scannura was conferred the office of Parish Priest



Part of the Banda Birżebbuġa welcoming Mgr. Archbishop Pawl Cremona O.P. on the 9th of September 2013.





The two band clubs accompanying new Parish Priest Can. Anton Galea-Scannura in 2013.



Mro Stephanie Buhagiar.



Mgr Pawl Cremona O.P. wearing the chasuble that Fr. Nikol Pace gifted to the Parish at the end of his service, delivering his message during the Solemn Pontifical



Moments from the Solemn Pontifical Mass on the 9th of September 2013.



Part of the trumpet libretto of the hymn Sliem Għalik Għażiż San Pietru





President Emanuel Zammit presenting a flower bouquet to the new Parish PrieSt



The Central Committees of both band clubs together with Auxiliary Bishop Charles. J. Scicluna, the Mayor and European Commissioner Karmenu Vella on the day when Can. Galea-Scannura was conferred the office of Parish Priest



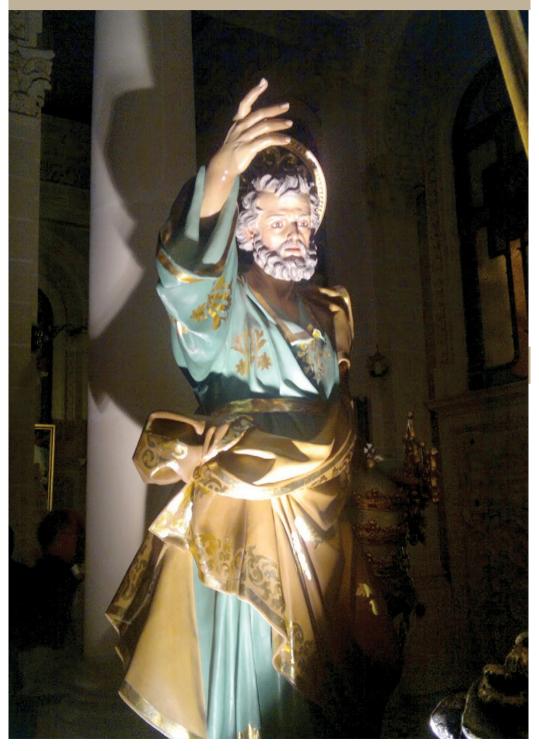
Auxiliary Bishop Mgr. Charles J. Scicluna conferring the office of Parish Priest to Can. Anton Galea-Scannura.



The statue of St Peter in the Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Valletta during the Notte Bianca.



The statue of St Peter property of the band club in the Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Valletta.



Part of the longest ice-cream, a national record.



A moment from Festa Ġelat.



Exchange of gifts between the Parish Priest Fr. Nikol Pace and the two band clubs.



The Solemn Pontifical on the 9th of September 2013. Besides an exhibition about the 100 years as a parish, the statues of St Peter and Our Lady of Sorrows were placed opposite each other.



The statue of Our Lady of Sorrows in the parish church.



The statue of Our Lady of Sorrows on the church parvis on Sunday the 15th of September.



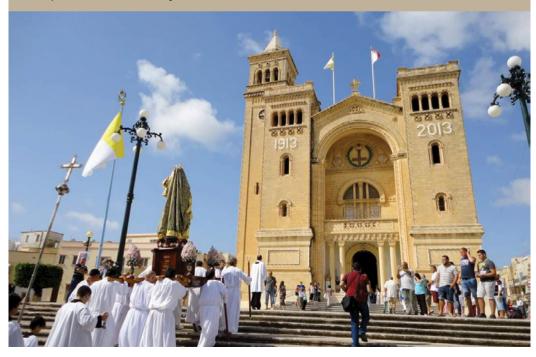
The statue of Our Lady of Sorrows infront of the old parish church during the pilgrimage in occasion of the 100th anniversary as a parish.



The statue in front of the church dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows.



The historic pilgrimage with the statue of Our Lady of Sorrows on the 15th of September on the way back to the Parish Church.



President Alexander Caruana switching on lit up representations of the years 1990 and 2015 on the 5th of December 2014.



President Emeritus Jason Vella inaugurating Anthony Camilleri Hall after the renovation works.



The secondary flag of the band club was given to the Kummissjoni Armar Estern



The Christmas Concert in the Parish Church.



Part of those who attended for the Christmas Home Concert.





Parish Priest Galea-Scannura with a delegation from the Central Committee and the Musical Director.



Birżebbuġa Street decorated for Christmas 2012.



THE SILVER JUBILEE

wenty five years passed like a long dream. A short dream filled with events of grief and sadness, but also with work and successes. The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa went into 2016, the year which was to see it triumph once again, acquire more property and become an even more integral part of the communal life in Birżebbuġa and Malta.

THE 2015 CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The Central Committee which was to lead the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa during the anniversary year was led by President Alexander Caruana assisted by Andy Mifsud, Secretary General Henry Bonnici assisted by Brandon Spiteri, Treasurer Walter Pace assisted by Benji Caruana, Director General Benny Camilleri assisted by Christopher Camilleri, Public Relations Officer Josef Schembri, Director for Social Activities Sue Pace, Archivist Andy Mifsud as well as members Eman Farrugia, Roderick Cachia and Connie Cutajar Fiorini.¹

ADDITION OF ANOTHER OFFICIAL COLOUR

Whilst the colour green remained the principal colour of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, during the Annual General Meeting, the colour red was approved as a secondary colour alongside the colour yellow.²

¹ Minutes 2015, Meeting 1, 7 th October 2014

² Minutes 2015, Meeting 2, 21 st October 2014

START OF THE ANNIVERSARY'S CELEBRATIONS

At the end of the morning march for the feast of Saint Peter the Apostle in 2016, President Alexander Caruana announced the start of the anniversary's celebrations from the premises' balcony. The celebrations were to last until the end of 2016; around a year and a half of festivities, some of which were planned whilst others weren't, with the latter being executed in the best way possible nevertheless.

On the 7th of November 2014, a press conference was held ³ to launch the anniversary logo designed by Jeremy Cachia from Żurrieq. The chosen slogan for the anniversary was '25 Sena Popolari f'Dax-Xtajtiet', whilst on the 5th of December 2014, the day when 25 years prior the six founders had dreamt of establishing the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, lit up representations of the years 1990 and 2015 were lit on the premises' façade. On the 14th of December 2014, 25 years after the first meeting of the Provisional Committee, the premises' main hall was inaugurated.

The inauguration was done by ex-President Jason Vella as recognition for the work he had done during his Presidency and his contribution to the hall's refurbishment. The hall was blessed and named for the band club's first President, Honorary President ad Vitam and Principal Benefactor, Anthony Camilleri. President Alexander Caruana also inaugurated a bust of Anthony Camilleri ⁴ as recognition for his work at the band club since its establishment.⁵

OFFICIAL BANDALORA

The Youth Section offered to pay for an embroidered bandalora which was to be first used during the week of the titular feast for Saint Peter the Apostle. This ornamental flag was to be of a dark red colour ⁶ designed by Alexander Caruana and painted by Mario Baldacchino.⁷ The embroidery was done in Gozo by George Cassar. Alexander Caruana offered to pay for the painting and the insignia.⁸

- 3 Minutes 2014, Meeting 22, 26 th September 2014
- 4 Minutes 2014, Meeting 22, 26 th September 2014
- President Alexander Caruana had wanted to name the main hall after Anthony Camilleri on the day he was elected President of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa. His wish was acclaimed by all members, especially by Anthony Camilleri who really appreciated his kind thought. This act by the new President brought new hope, after some events that had happened in the past when Alexander Caruana felt that he couldn't continue working with the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa. But thanks to this, two of the founders now started working together again. When asked by the author, Alexander Caruana said that he was hurt by what happened during the AGM on the 7th of October 2001 when some members didn't want him to return since he had been a member and President of the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen, but now it was time to unite and work in the best interest of the band club. Alexander says that it was thanks to lawyer Dr Bernard Grech that the wish of some members who didn't want him back didn't materialise. Instead he had to face a five year probation before becoming a member again. He says that it was greatly satisfying when after the 2008 titular feast, during an Extraordinary General Meeting he was accepted again as member and musician of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa.
- 6 Minutes 2015, Meeting 12, 7 th April 2015
- 7 Minutes 2015, Meeting 12, 7 th April 2015
- 8 Minutes 2015, Meeting 12, 7 th April 2015

NEW DECORATIONS FOR THE PREMISES' FACADE

The need for professional decorations for the premises' façade had been felt for a long time. The Commission for External Decorations commissioned artist Pawlu Muscat from Kalkara to work on the designs, embroidery and shading of the façade's decorations. Apart from this, new flags were made in green with the band club's insignia, one for the roundabout at Saint George's Bay and the other to serve as the band club's secondary flag. The flags were designed by Ryan Stivala. In the same period, a delegation from the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was invited for the mass held for the Diaconal Ordination of a youth from Birżebbuġa, Reverend Abraham d'Amato.

NEW TEACHING PROJECT

Apart from lessons for brass instruments by Musical Director Michael Bugelli and for woodwind instruments by Assistant Musical Director Charles Wallace Suda, a need was felt for a new teaching project to be initiated for music theory. Mro Robert Magro from Żejtun who was qualified to lead this project was contacted. Throughout the years, numerous students from the band club have sat for the London College of Music's examinations, always achieving satisfactory results.

THE 14TH OF JANUARY 2015

For Christmas time, the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa participated in the initiative *Minn Qalb it-Tfal* on the 29th and 30th of November 2014, in the decoration of Birżebbuġa Street,¹³ and also presented a Christmas Home Concert. Furthermore, it also participated in the Christmas Novena on the 22nd of December alongside the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen.¹⁴ The *Għaqda Storja u Kultura Birżebbuġa* also invited the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa for an activity on the 3rd of December 2014.¹⁵

Despite all these activities, the Central Committee together with the Sections, Members, Benefactors and supporters remained focused on celebrating the 14th of January 2015 as was appropriate for the Silver Jubilee of the band club's establishment. The 18:30 mass was concelebrated by the parish's clergy with the main celebrant being Archbishop Emeritus, His Excellency Mgr. Pawl Cremona O.P who had just ended his Episcopate. The mass was animated by the Banda Birżebbuġa directed by Musical Michael Bugelli and the Xmun Pietru Choir directed by Mro Felicienne Paris. After the thanksgiving mass, a plaque was uncovered at the premises with the names of the founders. The plaque was blessed by the Archbishop Emeritus, and a concert by the Banda Birżebbuġa was held followed by

⁹ Minutes 2015, Meeting 3, 4 th November 2014

¹⁰ Minutes 2015, Meeting 3, 4 th November 2014

¹¹ Minutes 2015, Meeting 3, 4 th November 2014

¹² Minutes 2015, Meeting 3, 4 th November 2014

¹³ Minutes 2015, Meeting 3, 4 th November 2014

¹⁴ Minutes 2015, Meeting 3, 4 th November 2014

¹⁵ Minutes 2015, Meeting 3, 4 th November 2014

a reception.¹⁶ The Central Committee presented a silver incense lighter to the parish on behalf of the members and supporters for it to be used on feasts.¹⁷

MUSIC ACADEMY

For the feast of Cathedra Petri, the traditional concert Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri wasn't held and instead, a musical academy was held at the parish church on Saturday the 21st of February 2015. The President of the Republic, Her Excellency Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, attended this academy. Amongst the music played by the Banda Birżebbuġa, accompanied by singers and the Xmun Pietru Choir, the *Inno di Gloria Tu Es Petrus* was exhibited along with a new cantata composed by President Alexander Caruana, *Petrvs Princeps Appostolorvm*, as well as a *Romanza* for Saint Peter the Apostle, with verses by the poet Joe Julian Farrugia and music composed by Musical Director Michael Bugelli. After the academy, a reception was held in the band club's hall. A commemorative plaque was unveiled by Her Excellency, the President of Malta, Marie Louise Coleiro Preca and blessed by the Parish Priest, Can. Anton Galea-Scannura.

VISIT FROM THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Leader of the Opposition, Dr Simon Busuttil visited Birżebbuġa during which he also visited the band club where he met with the members of the Central Committee and signed the Visitors' Book.¹⁹

EXHIBITION ABOUT THE BAND CLUB'S HISTORY

An exhibition about the history of the band club was held at its premises from the 22nd to the 29th of March.²⁰ There was also a plan to publish a book about the band club's history by Editor Josef Schembri, however, this did not materialise and was instead planned to be done for the 30th anniversary.²¹

PARTICIPATION IN THE FIREWORKS FESTIVAL

The band club's firework section, the Ghaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar, participated in a ground fireworks festival held at Floriana on the 18th of April 2015.²²

CELEBRATING THE REGATTA VICTORY

Birżebbuġa won the shield for the Regatta held on Freedom Day and the Birżebbuġa Regatta Club organised celebrations on the 2nd of May 2015. The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was amongst the participating organisations as it held a march

¹⁶ Minutes 2015, Meeting 3, 4 th November 2014

¹⁷ Minutes 2015, Meeting 2, 21 st October 2014

¹⁸ Minutes 2015, Meeting 2, 21 st October 2014

¹⁹ Minutes 2015, Meeting 11, 12 th March 2015

²⁰ Minutes 2015, Meeting 11, 12 th March 2015

²¹ Interview with President Alexander Caruana

²² Minutes 2015, Meeting 12, 7 th April 2015

along the locality's principal roads in a massed band with the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen.²³

INVITATION TO THE PRESIDENTS

For the anniversary, the individuals who had served as President throughout the years were invited to contribute an article for the annual edition of the publication for the titular $feaSt^{24}$

VISIT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

The Prime Minister of Malta, Dr Joseph Muscat, visited the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa during the week of the titular feast and as part of the anniversary's celebrations. He met with the members of the Central Committee and signed the Visitors' Book.²⁵ The Prime Minister also uncovered a plaque in the concert hall with the name of the band club's music school named after the Musical Director Michael Bugelli.

TWINNING WITH NADUR

Since Nadur celebrated the feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul Apostles, on the feast of the Imnarja on the 29th of June, the Birżebbuġa Local Council, with the support of the local band clubs, wanted to organise a twinning with the *Għaqda tal-Armar ta' Triq Diċembru Tlettax* from Nadur.²⁶ The twinning started with a group of statue bearers from the local band clubs as well as a group of supporters visiting Nadur for the demonstration on the 26th of June, whilst a contingent from Nadur visited Birżebbuġa on the third day of the Tridum.²⁷

SACERDOTAL ORDINATION

The Deacon who had been serving at the Birżebbuġa Parish, Reverend Carlo Calleja, invited the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa to be present for the mass during which he was to receive his Sacerdotal Ordination on the 3rd of July 2015.²⁸

PURCHASING OF NEW PROPERTY

The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa had wished to have its property adjacent to the main square for a long time. After the 2014 titular feast, Secretary Henry Bonnici spoke to President Caruana about the possibility of purchasing the property at 29, Misraħ il-Knisja, Birżebbuġa and for this to be conjoined with the current premises. Since the band club was still to pay off the debt for the purchasing of the pharmacy, the President wasn't too keen on the idea, however, he asked for the contact number of the property's owner for him to initiate contact. On one Saturday afternoon, the Central Committee went

- 23 Minutes 2015, Meeting 13, 22 nd April 2015
- 24 Minutes 2015, Meeting 14, 4 th May 2015
- 25 Minutes 2015, Meeting 14, 4 th May 2015
- 26 As the author remembers it
- 27 As the author remembers it
- 28 Minutes 2015, Meeting 18, 2 nd July 2015

to inspect the property and once it had seen how the main square opens up underneath the balcony, it decided to do everything it could for the purchase of the property to materialise.

The property required a lot of refurbishment and there was the thought of a bar to be opened for it to be rented out as a wine bar such that the rent income was used to pay the loan. Despite these restrictions, the Central Committee didn't give up and explored the possibilities of obtaining another loan. Several people were consulted including Jason Vella, Anthony Camilleri, Michael Schembri and Roderick Cachia. The owner at the time had also contacted the President urging him to reach an expedient decision because there was someone else who had expressed interest in purchasing the property.

On the 1st of May, the President told the owner, on behalf of the Central Committee, that they could proceed, and a purchase agreement was signed at the home of Treasurer Walter Pace in the presence of a member from the band club and a notary.²⁹

During a meeting of the Central Committee, it was decided that an Extraordinary General Meeting was to be held during the week before the titular feast's for the members to approve the decision.³⁰ The Extraordinary General Meeting was held on the 22nd of July 2016, and an affirmative decision was taken by the members present. The bar was to be expanded and a restaurant was also to be opened.³¹

Because of this purchase, the routes of the marches for the titular feast had to be revised to reflect the expansion of the premises.³²

RESHUFFLE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

After the titular feast, Benny Camilleri, Clare Baldacchino and Robert Baldacchino resigned from the Central Committee. Benji Caruana was appointed Director General instead of Benny Camilleri.³³

CHRISTMAS VILLAGE

The members of the Central Committee had the idea of organising a Christmas Village with the proposed dates being the 5th and 6th of December 2015.³⁴ During the same month, the band club held the Christmas Concert on the 22nd of December and participated in a service with the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen at the parish church on the 21st of December. Preparations were also being made for the 2016 musical services. The concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* was planned for the 20th of February 2016, whilst a concert of

²⁹ Minutes 2015, Meeting 18, 2 nd July 2015

³⁰ Minutes 2015, Meeting 18, 2 nd July 2015

³¹ Minutes 2015, Meeting 18, 2 nd July 2015

³² Minutes 2015, Meeting 27, 18 th November 2015

³³ Minutes 2015, Meeting 21, 25 th August 2015

³⁴ Minutes 2015, Meeting 21, 25 th August 2015

funeral marches and sacred music was to be organised in the old parish church, dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows.³⁵ Some members of the band club also wanted to participate in that year's edition of the fundraising marathon "*L-Istrina*".³⁶

APPLICATIONS FOR AN ELEVATOR

Since the band club's premises were steadily expanding, a need was felt for the installation of an elevator. An application was made with the Malta Community Chest Fund for this aim. More applications for other projects were made with the Cultural Communities, Erasmus, Aġenzija Żgħażagħ and the Small Creative Scheme.³⁷ President Alexander Caruana and Vice President Andy Mifsud started taking care of the applications on behalf of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa.

STATUTORY AMENDMENTS

After years of discussion, several amendments were made to the band club's statute. One of the clauses enabled the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa to start applying for funds for Non-Governmental Organisations ³⁸ whilst another amendment changed the band club's address to "Ġawhra ta' San Pietru, 29, Misraħ il-Knisja, Birżebbuġa". ³⁹

MORE INVITATIONS TO VALLETTA

After several years of participating in the feast of St Paul Shipwrecked, the Banda Birżebbuġa received another invitation from another parish in Valletta, that of St Augustine, to participate in a musical service on Saturday, the feast's eve, and also on the feast day. An invitation was also made for the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar to present a spectacle of mechanised fireworks for the same feaSt⁴⁰ Apart from this the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was to lend its musical stand to the Festive Committee for the feast of Saint Augustine, for these to be used by the band clubs invited for the musical concert held in Great Siege Square.⁴¹

PLANS FOR THE NEW PROPERTY

Upon the appointment of Alexander Caruana as President, it was suggested from the Central Committee's end to demolish the shed (*ir-remissa*) which had been purchased a few years after the band club was established for three floors to be built as an expansion of the premises. After the approval of the purchase of the property in Misraħ il-Knisja, plans started being made for the part of the shed to be expanded as well as for the new part of the premises adjacent to the main square, such that the new expanded premises was

³⁵ Minutes 2015, Meeting 21, 25 th August 2015

³⁶ Minutes 2015, Meeting 29, 17 th December 2015

³⁷ As the author remembers it

³⁸ Minutes 2015, Meeting 31, 12 th January 2015

³⁹ Minutes 2015, Meeting 31, 12 th January 2015

⁴⁰ As the author remembers it

⁴¹ As the author remembers it

opened to the public in as little time as possible.⁴² Once again, the Central Committee, was aided by ex-President and founder Jason Vella as a draughtsman as well as by Architect Michael Schembri.⁴³ The Central Committee had planned for the new part's bar to be used as a Wine Bar.⁴⁴ With the opening of the new part, a need was felt to initiate discussions about the pedestal for the statue of Saint Peter, which was the property of the parish, used for the demonstration held during the week of the titular feast by the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen, to be moved to a different place. Hence representatives of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa wrote to the Parish Priest, Can. Anton Galea-Scannura to initiate discussions for an agreement to be reached between all involved parties.⁴⁵

DISSOLUTION OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Upon the end of the Silver Jubilee anniversary from the establishment of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, the Commission for the 25th Anniversary was dissolved on the 14th of January 2016, the day on which the band club celebrated 26 years from its official establishment.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the Annual General Meeting and hence the elections for the Central Committee were set for January 2016 such that the elected committee at the end of 2014 remained appointed until the end of the anniversary.

CONCLUSION

And hence ended 2015, the anniversary year, during which the band club remembered and celebrated the aims for which it had been established, a year during which the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa continued being the voice of the Birżebbuġa locals, and continued building its identity, now also having a presence in the Birżebbuġa main square. The story continues to be written ... assertively and with certainty.

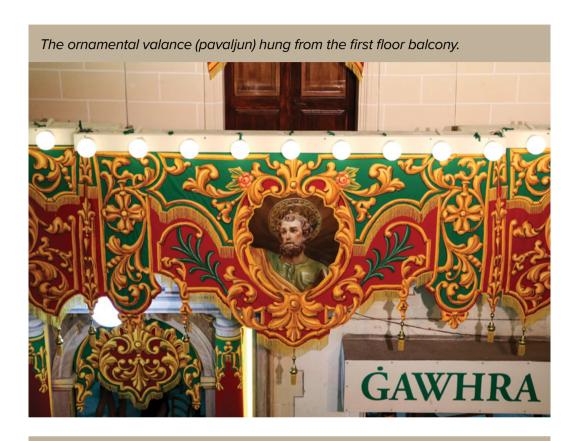
⁴² As the author remembers it

⁴³ As the author remembers it

⁴⁴ As the author remembers it

⁴⁵ Minutes 2015, Meeting 31, 12 th January 2016

⁴⁶ Minutes 2015, Meeting 31, 12 th January 2016









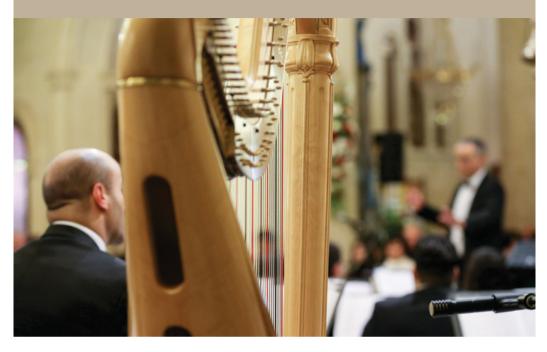
The march during the anniversary celebrations.



The Banda Birżebbuġa and Xmun Pietru Choir directed by Mro Michael Bugelli on the 14th of January 2015.



Different instruments joined the Banda Birżebbuġa for the academy.



President Alexander Caruana presenting a memento to the President of the Republic of Malta Marie Louise Coleiro Preca

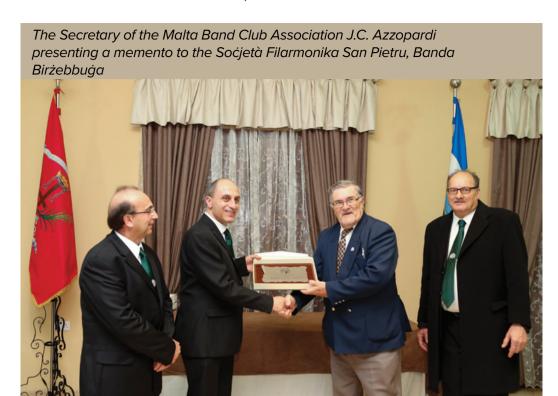


President Marie Louise Coleiro Preca signing the Visitors' Book.



A commemorative marble plaque being inaugurated by President Marie Louise Coleiro Preca for the occasion of the 25th Anniversary.

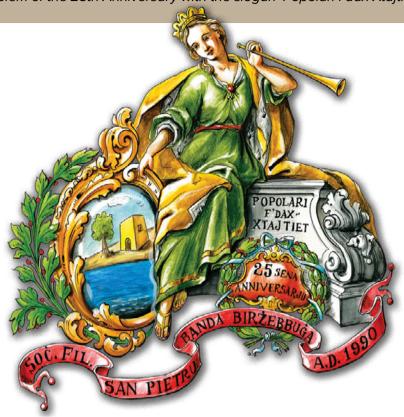




The six founders together with President Emeritus Emanuel Zammit on the 14th of January 2015.



The emblem of the 25th Anniversary with the slogan 'Popolari f'dax-Xtajtiet'



Archbishop Emeritus with the Central Committee.



The reception in the parish church hall after the Academy.



Five of the six founders with Archbishop Emeritus Pawl Cremona O.P.



After the Solemn Mass on the 14th of January 2015 a reception was held in the premises.





The emblem for the 25th Anniversary decorating the balcony of the premises in Birżebbuġa Street.



Archbishop Mgr. Pawl Cremona O.P., Parish Priest Galea-Scannura and the Mayor of Birżebbuġa on the 14th of January 2015.





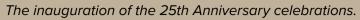


The statue of St Peter in front the main door of the premises in Birżebbuġa Street in occasion of the 25th Anniversary.



The statue of St Peter property of the band club and the Main Flag of Honour during a national exhibition about the Maltese festa.







The signing of the contract for the new extension of the premises in Misraħ il-Knisja



The titular statue of St Peter Apostle passing in front of the premises in Birżebbuġa Street.



Part of the Banda Birżebbuġa during the academy in the parish church.



Ground fireworks in the village square with the premises in the background.



The exhibition for the occasion of the 25th Anniversary.



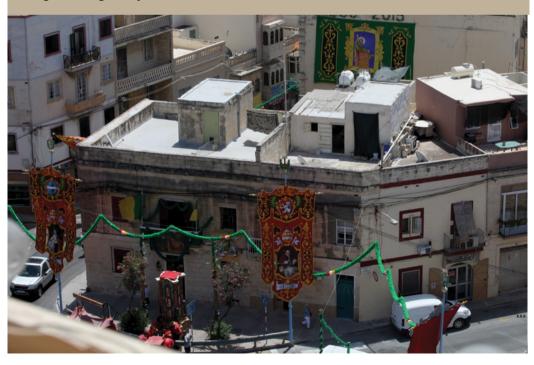


Pop Concert 2015.





A photo taken from the bell tower in 2015 showing the new property that was bought during that year.





The academy in the parish church.





THE WAY FORWARD: SERIOUSNESS, DISCIPLINE, SUCCESS

fter the celebrations for the Silver Jubilee from the official establishment of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, it was time for the band club's administration supported by the members and the enthusiasts to embark on several projects which helped the band club in facing challenges in a disciplined manner and turn them into various opportunities.

THE 2016 CENTRAL COMMITTEE

After the celebrations of the anniversary, the Central Committee elected to lead the band club was composed of President Alexander Caruana assisted by Andy Mifsud who also served as website administrator and band delegate. Secretary General Henry Bonnici was assisted by Josepha Busuttil whilst Treasurer Walter was assisted by Johann Borg. Josef Schembri was appointed Director for Publications whilst Benji Caruana was appointed Director General assisted by Christopher Camilleri. Benji Caruana was also the representative for the Commission of External Decorations on the Central Committee. Suzanne Pace was appointed Events Coordinator and was assisted by Steve Dalli, Clayton Vella was appointed representative for the Youth Section and Eman Farrugia was appointed representative for the Ghaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar.¹

THE WORK CONTINUES

The Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar confirmed its participation in the Ground Fireworks Festival in Floriana on the 2nd of April 2016. The band club also confirmed its participation in a Carnival activity organised by the Birżebbuġa Local Council. The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa was to have a food stall at the event. A meeting was held with

the Maltese Fund for Art and the President's Office on how the band club could apply for and benefit from funding. At the time, Honorary President Jason Vella also finished the plans for the expansion of the premises for works to be started that year. Another invitation was received for a trip to Latvia, however the Central Committee, being aware of the expenses being faced by the band club, declined.²

A NEW ORNAMENTAL FAN (IMREWHA)

An idea for a grand ornamental fan, decorated with paintings,³ to be unveiled as a surprise during the march held on the day of the exposition of Saint Peter's statue was floated around and this project was inaugurated at the end of the aforementioned march for the 2016 titular feaSt⁴

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE IMGARR BAND

During this administrative year, the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa started building a relationship with the Soċjetà Filarmonika Marija Mtellgħa s-Sema from Imġarr by applying for a funding scheme by Aġenzija Żgħażagħ to organise several collaborative events. A Youth Exchange was done with an English band.⁵ A new uniform in green was bought such that the Banda Birżebbuġa is better represented.⁶

THE PEDESTAL FOR SAINT PETER'S STATUE IN THE SQUARE

Since the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa had acquired a property in the main square, as was briefly mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, a need arose to relocate the parish's pedestal which was used by the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen. Hence the Central Committee for the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru Banda Birżebbuġa sent a letter to the Parish Priest on the matter. The Police Station's Superintendent asked for a meeting with the two local band clubs on the matter however this was not held since the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen was still to decide on the matter. The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa also sent a letter to the Vicar General of the Maltese Archdiocese. A meeting was planned for the 9th of February 2016, however, a lot of discussions were still required for an agreement to be reached. Hence the band club's lawyer Dr Henry Antoncich sent a letter to the Parish PrieSt. The Parish Priest, Can. Anton Galea-Scannura replied saying that the pedestal was to remain in the same place for the time being. Hence the Central Committee for Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa once again contacted its lawyer to reach out to the Parish Priest again. During a vote taken by the Birżebbuġa Local Council, a majority of the Councillors agreed that the

- 2 ibid
- 3 As the author remembers it
- 4 As the author remembers it
- 5 Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016
- 6 Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016
- 7 Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016
- 8 Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016
- 9 Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016

pedestal should be moved.¹⁰ The Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen objected to this decision and hence it had to be rediscussed.¹¹

On the 27th of May 2016, a meeting was held at the Archbishop's Curia in Floriana. For this meeting, there were present Mgr Frans Abdilla, the Birżebbuġa Parish Priest, the Birżebbuġa Police Station's Superintendent and Inspector as well as representatives from the two band clubs. Mgr. Abdilla suggested that no changes be made for 2016 however discussions were to be initiated immediately after that year's titular feast in preparation for 2017. The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa disagreed with this and therefore another meeting was to planned in a week's time. The meeting was held and it was very cordial. Various matters were discussed including the issue with the statue, the main square's barricades, and the march routes. The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa proposed ending all its marches in the main square in front of the new property by playing the hymn march and the Popular Hymn to Saint Peter.¹²

Nevertheless, despite the titular feast being very near, a lot of matters were still to be discussed. The Central Committee for the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa spoke to its lawyer for guidance. The Parish Priest, Can. Anton Galea-Scannura also expressed his disposition to meet with the local band clubs.¹³

The President for the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen Joe Zahra conceded that the Banda Birżebbuġa went to the main square twice, on Monday and Friday of the feast's titular week.¹⁴ That year, it was the Banda Birżebbuġa's turn to play on Tuesday and the march ended in the main square for the first time.¹⁵

Unfortunately, the situation didn't improve to the detriment of the amicable relationship between the band clubs. Secretary Ivan Zammit, on behalf of the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen sent a letter revoking the invitation for the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa to attend their concert for the titular feast whilst also informing the opposing band club that it wasn't going to send representatives for the concert held by the Banda Birżebbuġa. The Central Committee once again contacted its lawyer.¹⁶

During a meeting with the band club's lawyer, the aforementioned problems were discussed as well as the speech made by the President for Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen during their concert for the titular feaSt The lawyer was to contact the Parish Priest

¹⁰ Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016

¹¹ Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016

¹² Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016

¹³ Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016

¹⁴ Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016

¹⁵ Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016

¹⁶ Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016

for a meeting to be held with the hope that an agreeable settlement would be reached.¹⁷ During the concert for the titular feast by the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, President Alexander Caruana conveyed messages of unity and courage and sent his greetings to the President, committees, members, musicians and enthusiasts of the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen despite them not being present.¹⁸

At the beginning of 2017, a meeting was held between the Parish Priest and representatives from both local band clubs. The Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen conceded relocating the pedestal given that no other statue was placed next to it nor provocative material.¹⁹ These conditions were satisfactory for all parties and hence starting from the 2017 titular feast, the statue of Saint Peter which was owned by the parish but used by the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen was moved to the main square's central strip.²⁰

NEW PAINTINGS

A commission entrusted with decorating the premises was established and the first project it embarked on was a set of paintings about the life of Saint Peter Apostle for the premises' main hall, Anthony Camilleri Hall. The same Commission also paid for frames for the same hall.²¹ Filled with enthusiasm, this commission also offered to pay for a niche for the statue of Saint Peter which was the property of the band club.²² During this period the annual concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* as well as the concert and exhibition for Holy Week were held.²³ The paintings were made by Gozitan artist Josef Camilleri and the frame for the big painting was gifted by ex-Secretary General Roderick Cachia.

THE PROJECT FOR THE PREMISES' EXPANSION

The project to expand the premises took another dimension when the bank issued a sanction letter and the Planning Authority issued a screening letter.²⁴ On the 27th of May 2016 the final agreement for the property was signed. The contract was signed in the presence of notary Dr Marilyn Sultana, a member of the band club. The signatories on behalf of the band club were President Alexander Caruana, Secretary General Henry Bonnici and Treasurer Walter Pace. The contract was signed at the BOV branch in St George's Square, Valletta. Hence, the official address of the band club was changed, and it was also decided to install a system of security cameras.²⁵

The Central Committee felt the need to inform the members of these developments and

- 17 Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016
- 18 Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016
- 19 Minutes 2016, Meeting 2, 11 th February 2016
- 20 Minutes 2017, Meeting 11, 28 th April 2017
- 21 Minutes 2017, Meeting 11, 28 th April 2017
- 22 Minutes 2017, Meeting 11, 28 th April 2017
- 23 Minutes 2017, Meeting 11, 28 th April 2017
- 24 Minutes 2017, Meeting 11, 28 th April 2017
- 25 Minutes 2017, Meeting 11, 28 th April 2017

hence a meeting about this investment and the 2016 feast was held on the 11th of July 2016.26

At long last, the permit from the Planning Authority for the new property was granted after it was approved by its Board on the 5th of August, the third day of the titular feast's Tridum, with the news being announced by the President in his speech during the titular feast's concert. Hence the work could be started. The Central Committee approached Jason Cutajar for this project.²⁷ Daniel Cuschieri also offered his help.²⁸

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

At the time the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa attended prayer meetings led by the Banda Vilhena from Floriana and for which the Maltese Archbishop, His Excellency Mgr. Charles J. Scicluna was also present.²⁹ More information on this can be found in the chapter discussing the statue of the Risen ChriSt The Vice Parish Priest, Fr. Roderick Camilleri had also just ended his sacerdotal ministry in Birżebbuġa as he was to be appointed as Parish Priest for the parish of St Anne, Marsascala. He invited representatives from the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa for the function during which he was appointed Parish Priest for the mentioned parish.³⁰ During this year, Reverend Carlo Calleja was also serving in Birżebbuġa. Representatives of the band club also attended a thanksgiving mass when he approached the end of his pastoral work in Birżebbuġa.³¹

ELDERLY OF THE YEAR

For the Birżebbuġa Elderly of the Year, organised by the Birżebbuġa Local Council, the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa nominated Emmanuel Mangion, however, he had already been awarded the title, and hence the band club nominated Joe Abdilla instead.³²

MUSIC THEORY LESSONS

Being taught by Mro Robert Magro, the students attending music theory lessons were achieving satisfactory results, hence the Central Committee applied for funding from Aġenzija Żgħażagħ for the purchase of material for the students, with the application being accepted.³³ On the 3rd of September 2016, a delegation from Aġenzija Żgħażagħ visited the premises and inspected the classroom for the music theory lessons, its computer and the provided past papers.³⁴

- 26 Minutes 2017, Meeting 11, 28 th April 2017
- 27 Minutes 2017, Meeting 11, 28 th April 2017
- 28 Minutes 2016, Meeting15, 22 nd September 2016
- 29 Minutes 2016, Meeting 12, 30 th June 2016
- 30 Minutes 2016, Meeting 12, 30 th June 2016
- 31 Minutes 2016, Meeting 12, 30 th June 2016
- 32 Minutes 2016, Meeting 7, 19 th April 2016
- 33 Minutes 2016, Meeting 14, 10 th September 2016
- 34 Minutes 2016, Meeting 14, 10 th September 2016

THE BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA GOES TO SICILY

After various applications, the Arts Council Malta accepted an application for the Creative Communities Scheme. The Malta Arts Fund confirmed a sum of €5,000 given to the Banda Birżebbuġa for it to visit Riposto, and perform there between the 14th and 16th of October 2016. On the 15th of October, a service was to be held in collaboration with the Jonica-Etnea band from Riposto, Sicily.³⁵ At the time the Youth Section also had new polo shirts made, and a meeting was held by the Malta Band Club Association, with the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa being represented, about the plans for Valletta 18.³⁶

OPEN DAY

On the 25th of June 2016, an open day was held in the premises' main hall. A need was felt to fix the cross of the principal flag of honour, which cross was to be used once a year only when the embroidered principal flag of honour was used.³⁷ The band club was also invited to participate in activities organised by the Local Council for Birżebbuġa Day on the 18th of September 2016.³⁸

RESTORATION OF THE TITULAR STATUE'S PEDESTAL

On the feast of Cathedra Petri in 2015, Parish Priest Can. Anton Galea-Scannura announced the long-awaited project to restore the titular statue of Saint Peter. The project was to be split over two years. Between the 2015 and 2016 titular feasts the pedestal was to be restored whilst the statue was to be taken for restoration between the 2016 and 2017 titular feasts. The work on the pedestal was entrusted to John Orlando from Tarxien, whilst the restoration of the statue was entrusted to Cavalier Alfred Camilleri Cauchi and his son Aaron.³⁹ The two band clubs agreed to give a donation for this project.⁴⁰

THE BAND CLUB'S STATUE'S 25TH YEAR

The band club's statue of Saint Peter had been in Birżebbuġa for 25 years. Hence, as was always done for special anniversaries, the procession for the third day of the Tridum started from Marsaxlokk, arriving there with a carcade by various members and supporters. The participation of children was also noticeable. This activity was also joined with a philanthropic initiative. The chosen entity to benefit from this initiative was the *Community Chest Fund*, and hence the President of the Republic Her Excellency Marie Louise Coleiro Preca was invited and presented with the collected funds when the statue arrived by sea. Speeches were made by the President of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa Alexander Caruana and Her Excellency. Apart from the money presented to the President of the Republic, the band club also presented a gift to Chev. Alfred Camilleri

³⁵ ibid.

³⁶ ibid.

³⁷ Minutes 2016, Meeting 14, 10 th September 2016

³⁸ Minutes 2016, Meeting 14, 10 th September 2016

³⁹ Minutes 2016, Meeting 11, 15 th June 2016

⁴⁰ Minutes 2016, Meeting 11, 15 th June 2016

Cauchi who had made the statue back in 1991 and was present for the occasion. A march was held afterwards as per usual.⁴¹

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

A suggestion was made for the band club to establish a new commission that would be responsible for the band club's media and which would be entrusted with maintaining an archive of articles, photos, videos and other material which was related to the band club.⁴² An amendment was effected in the statute allowing the Central Committee to contact members who didn't form part of the aforementioned committee to occupy a role on the committee which was suitable for them.⁴³

2017

Throughout 2017, the Birżebbuġa parish was to celebrate three anniversaries related to Saint Peter and the parish itself. On the 29th of June 2017, 1950 years from the martyrdom of Saint Peter and Saint Paul Apostles was to be celebrated, as well as 80 years from when the parish's titular feast was changed to Saint Peter and 70 years from the arrival of Saint Peter's first titular statue, known as Saint Peter *ż-Żgħir* (the small one), in Birżebbuġa. During the titular feast's week, Birżebbuġa was to welcome back the titular statue from restoration.⁴⁴

THE 2017 CENTRAL COMMITTEE

At the end of September 2016, an Annual General Meeting was held to elect a new Central Committee to lead the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa. Alexander Caruana retained his role as President assisted by Andy Mifsud, Secretary General Henry Bonnici assisted by Klein Debono and Treasurer Walter Pace assisted by Nathaniel Debono. Sue Pace was appointed representative for the Women's Section, Josepha Busuttil was the Coordinator for Social Events, Benji Caruana was appointed Director General assisted by Christopher Camilleri, Andy Mifsud was also the band delegate, Eman Farrugia was the representative for the Ghaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar, Clayton Vella was the representative for the Youth Section whilst Josef Schembri was the Director for Publications.⁴⁵

THE TRIP TO RIPOSTO

The first initiative that the new Central Committee had to deal with was the trip to Riposto, Sicily.⁴⁶ Along with the Central Committee, members and enthusiasts, the band club was also aided by Ludwig Noel Desira when it came to the planning of the third trip in the band club's history. Ludwig had provided President Alexander Caruana with several contacts,

⁴¹ Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (2017); Annual Pubblication for the Titular feast p. 32, 33

⁴² Minutes 2016, Meeting 16, 29 th September 2016

⁴³ Minutes 2016, Meeting 16, 29 th September 2016

⁴⁴ As the author remembers it

⁴⁵ Minutes 2017, Meeting 1, 22 ndSeptember 2016

⁴⁶ Minutes 2017, Meeting 1, 22 nd September 2016

with the latter then continuing to work on the project by contacting Riposto's mayor, the President of the Ionica-Etnea band as well as the Maltese Consulate.

During the trip, the Banda Birżebbuġa met Riposto's mayor at the city gate of the Municipio Comunale and held a march which started in the limits between Giarre and Riposto and ended in the Riposto main square. A brochure was made in Maltese and Italian for distribution in Riposto as well as a feature about Malta, Birżebbuġa and the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, which was shown in the Riposto main square.

This city has a basilica dedicated to Saint Peter Apostle, and the Banda Birżebbuġa performed in front of this basilica and even presented a concert in the main square. As it had done in Rome in 2010, the Banda Birżebbuġa exhibited the Popular Hymn to Saint Peter and the hymn march *Ragħaj tal-Knisja*. During the concert, various musical pieces were exhibited notably the symphonic march named Riposto composed by the band club's Musical Director, Mro Michael Bugelli and The Temple of Hercules, composed by Mro Ray Sciberras based on the legend that the Phoenicians had built a temple for Hercules at *Borġ in-Nadur* in Birżebbuġa. ⁴⁷ This piece was written especially for the occasion and is the exclusive property of the band club.

MILIED FIL-PJAZZA AND OTHER CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

The Birżebbuġa parish was going to start organising an activity in December with the name *Milied fil-Pjazza*, and the group entrusted with this activity contacted both local band clubs to perform together.⁴⁸ A meeting was held between the two local band clubs and the organising group on the 9th of November 2016 for the collaborative service to be held on the 3rd of December 2016.⁴⁹ Apart from this, the Local Council together with the Birżebbuġa parish was going to organise a Christmas concert at the parish church on the 18th of December 2016. The organisers wanted the two local band clubs to perform together with the Joy Gospel Choir.⁵⁰ At the same time, the band club also participated in a cleanup organised by the Freeport on the 23rd of November 2016.⁵¹

THE PRESIDENT JOINS THE LOCAL COUNCIL

After several resignations in the Birżebbuġa Local Council, President Alexander Caruana was co-opted as part of the Local Council.⁵²

THE BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA IN RABAT

The Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuga continued organising activities such

⁴⁷ Minutes 2017, Meeting 1, 22 nd September 2016

⁴⁸ Minutes 2017, Meeting 4, 16 th November 2016

⁴⁹ Minutes 2017, Meeting 1, 22 nd September 2016

⁵⁰ Minutes 2017, Meeting 4, 16 th November 2016

⁵¹ Minutes 2017, Meeting 4, 16 th November 2016

⁵² Minutes 2017, Meeting 6, 9 th January 2017

as the annual concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* as well as a theatrical production together with a concert of funeral marches for Holy Week.⁵³ The band club also participated in a symposium about the historical aspect of Saint Peter Apostle's martyrdom organised by the Birżebbuġa parish. The symposium was presented by Can. Nicholas Doublet and held at the parish church on the eve of the feast of Cathedra Petri, on the 21st of February 2017. At the end, a logo for the 1950th anniversary of Saint Peter Apostle's martyrdom was inaugurated.⁵⁴ At the time, Rabat was also celebrating the same anniversary, and with the help of Christopher Bonnici, who taught music at the Każin San Pawl, Banda Konti Ruġġieru at the time, contact was initiated between the Każin San Pawl, Banda Konti Ruġġieru from Rabat and the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa such that the Banda Birżebbuġa performed in Rabat on the 29th of June and for it to be accompanied by its statue of Saint Peter.⁵⁵ The invitation was made by the committee that took care of the feasts of Corpus Domini and Saint Paul in Rabat. The Banda Konti Ruġġieru also performed for the occasion and the statue of Saint Peter was joined by the statue of Saint Paul from Hal Safi for a procession to be held for the 1950th anniversary of the martyrdom of both saints.⁵⁶

THE RISEN CHRIST

For the 2017 Holy Week, an agreement had been reached for the band club's statue of the Risen Christ to be used after eighteen years. Discussions were initiated with the Parish Priest and Mgr. Frans Abdilla..⁵⁷ More information on this can be found in a dedicated chapter.

THE GROUND FIREWORKS FESTIVAL

The Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar participated once again in the Ground Fireworks Festival held in Floriana on the eve of the feast for Saint Publius. In 2017, the band club's firework section ranked first in the category for the Best Maltese Product.⁵⁸ At the same time the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa received 8,000 Euro from the Fund for Just Causes to cover the expenses of the band club's bar.⁵⁹

THE IMNARJA

A Tridum for Saint Peter was held at the Birżebbuġa parish church for the Imnarja. A relic of Saint Paul Apostle was brought from Rabat to be used with the relic of Saint Peter. Various activities were held including a prayer session and *Pietru Fest* on the parvis. On the 29th of June 2027, the Banda Birżebbuġa played in a massed band with the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen in a procession during which the parish's titular statue went along the roads of

⁵³ As the author remembers it

⁵⁴ As the author remembers it

⁵⁵ As the author remembers it

⁵⁶ As the author remembers it

⁵⁷ As the author remembers it

⁵⁸ ibid.

⁵⁹ ibid.

the titular procession's route. In the evening, representatives from the band club attended a solemn mass celebrated by Archbishop Emeritus, His Excellency Mgr Paul Cremona, to end the festivities of the 1950th anniversary of the martyrdom of Saint Peter Apostle, 80 years from when the parish's titular feast was changed from Our Lady of Sorrows to Saint Peter and 70 years from when the titular statue of Saint Peter was brought to Birżebbuġa in 1947.

On the second day of the Tridum, on the 3rd of August 2017, a pilgrimage was held with the band club's statue of Saint Peter, accompanied by various members and enthusiasts. The statue left Birżebbuġa and visited the parish of Saint Paul's Conversion in Hal Safi, the parish of Saint Paul's Martyrdom in Rabat, where the delegation was invited to go down to Saint Paul's grotto by the Archpriest, the parish for Saint Augustine and that of Saint Paul Shipwrecked in Valletta. The statue then went to the port in Marsaxlokk where it was boarded onto a boat. Accompanied by various boats, the statute arrived at Pretty Bay and a procession followed with the participation of the Banda Birżebbuġa as per usual. Funds were once again collected for the Community Chest Fund. The Maltese President Her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca was also present for the occasion.

The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa commissioned a new hymn for Saint Peter for the celebrated anniversaries. The hymn *Baħar ta' Fidi* was composed by Professor Joseph Vella with its lyrics being written by poet Sebastian Saliba.⁶¹ It was gifted by the local musician, Josef Schembri.

THE TITULAR STATUE RETURNS FROM RESTORATION

The titular statue returned from restoration on the first day of the 2017 titular feast, the 31st of July 2017. The statue was taken from Alfred and Aaron Camilleri Cauchi's studio to Marsaxlokk where it was boarded onto a boat and accompanied by various other boats to St George's Bay in Birżebbuġa. It was met by a massed band by the Banda Birżebbuġa and the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen which accompanied the statue back to the parish church. The statue was blessed by the Archbishop for Malta, His Excellency Mgr. Charles J. Scicluna. Along the way, all the local organisations, including the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, presented a flower to the statue. The fireworks section, the Għaqda 22 ta' Frar, also participated in the occasion. At the end of the march held by the Banda Birżebbuġa, the decorations for the new part of the premises which was adjacent to the main square were unveiled. This project was done by the Commission for External Decorations.⁶²

A SPECIAL FEAST IN VALLETTA

The parish for St Augustine in Valletta invited the Banda Birżebbuga for a festive march for

⁶⁰ ibid.

⁶¹ ibid.

⁶² ibid.

the occasion of the arrival of their new statue. The fireworks section also took part in the festivities. The band club participated on the 6th of October 2017. In the same period, the band club also participated in *Jum Birżebbuġa* and the Birżebbuġa Regatta.⁶³

CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2018

An Annual General Meeting was held to elect a Central Committee to lead the band club into the new year. Alexander Caruana remained the President assisted by Andy Mifsud, Henry Bonnici was the Secretary General assisted by Sephora Cutajar whilst Walter Pace was the Treasurer assisted by Nathaniel Debono. Andy Mifsud and Peter Paul Caruana were band delegates whilst Jonathan Bonnici was appointed Public Relations Officer. Josef Schembri was confirmed as the Director for Publications, Nikita Caruana was entrusted with the band club's applications, Karl Farrugia was appointed representative for the Youth Section, Benji Caruana was appointed representative for the Commission for External Decorations, Eman Farrugia was appointed representative for the firework section, the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar, whilst Christopher Camilleri, Sue Pace and Jordi Zahra were appointed members.⁶⁴

MORE PARTICIPATIONS AND PREPARATIONS

Preparations were initiated for the nearing Christmas. A day trip to Gozo was held on the 7th of January 2018, where various cribs were visited whilst a Dinner Dance was also held.⁶⁵ The Banda Birżebbuġa participated once again in the parish's *Milied fil-Pjazza*,⁶⁶ held the Christmas Home Concert with the participation of the music pupils in the Anthony Camilleri Hall on the 20th of December 2017 as well a concert for the Novena at the parish church on the 17th of December 2017.⁶⁷

50 YEARS SINCE THE CONFIRMATION OF THE FINDING OF SAINT PETER'S TOMB

For the occasion of 50 years since the relics found in the crypt underneath the Basilica in the Vatican were confirmed to be those of Saint Peter Apostle, announced Ex-Cathedra by Pope Paul VI in 1968, the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa wanted to celebrate this anniversary with a special concert near the feast of Cathedra Petri, An application for funding was made with the Arts Council Malta, which application which accepted resulting in the band club receiving €3,522 for a concert to be held on the 24th of February 2018 at St Paul's Cathedral in Mdina. ⁶⁸ The selected music required musicians of high technical acumen, ⁶⁹ as expressed by Musical Director Mro Michael Bugelli. Amongst the selected music, *The Archangels*, composed by Franco Cesarini, was performed for the

⁶³ Minutes 2017, Meeting 14, 23 rd August 2017

⁶⁴ Minutes 2018, Meeting 1, 17 th October 2017

⁶⁵ Minutes 2018, Meeting 1, 17 th October 2017

⁶⁶ Minutes 2018, Meeting 1, 17 th October 2017

⁶⁷ Minutes 2018, Meeting 3, 28 th November 2017

⁶⁸ Minutes 2018, Meeting 3, 28 th November 2017

⁶⁹ Minutes 2018, Meeting 3, 28 th November 2017

first time by a Maltese band.⁷⁰ Alexander Caruana, the band club's President, composed an Omaggio for the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuga, and was also performed for the first time.

The Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuga also published a logo for the anniversary.71 Representatives from the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuga were invited for multiple interviews on the radio and television to promote this special concert.72 The concert was broadcasted once again on the television station F Living on the 11th of November 2018 and on Republic Day of the same year, 13th of December.⁷³

THE BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA AND VALLETTA 18

The Banda Birżebbuga was invited to participate in the opening of the celebrations for when Valletta was made the European City of Culture, on the 20th of January.74 The Banda Birżebbuga performed various festive marches in Glormu Cassar Street.75 The remissa part of the premises was also rented out after its renovation was completed.⁷⁶

ORNAMENTAL FLAG FROM THE YOUTH SECTION

The Youth Section commissioned a new bandalora which was to be mechanised.77 It was to depict, in paint, the Liberation of Saint Peter from prison. It was inaugurated during Tuesday's march, on the 31st of July 2018.78 This ornamental flag was added to the inventory of festive equipment together with the lion and the Youth Section's insignia made in paper mâché which had been unveiled two years prior.79

RESTORATION WORKS

On the 3rd of February 2018, the principal flag post was brought down for restoration and its harp was also regilded.80 A need was also felt to restore the statue of the Risen ChriSt Alfred and his son Aaron Camilleri Cauchi were contacted for this work.81

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Representatives from the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuga attended the solemn mass for the feast of Cathedra Petri on the 22nd of February,

- 70 Minutes 2018, Meeting 3, 28 th November 2017
- Minutes 2018, Meeting 3, 28 th November 2017 71
- Minutes 2018, Meeting 3, 28 th November 2017 72
- Minutes 2018, Meeting 21, 19 th September 2018 73
- 74 Minutes 2018, Meeting 21, 19 th September 2018
- 75 Minutes 2018, Meeting 21, 19 th September 2018
- 76 Minutes 2018, Meeting 4, 12 th December 2017
- 77 Interview with President Alexander Caruana
- 78 Interview with President Alexander Caruana
- 79 Interview with President Alexander Caruana
- Minutes 2018, Meeting 15, 14 th June 2018 80
- 81 Minutes 2018, Meeting 15, 14 th June 2018

placing a bouquet of roses in front of the titular statue. The Youth Section also organised an exhibition for Holy Week, inaugurated on the 23rd of March 2018.⁸² Treasurer Walter Pace suggested establishing a new commission which would be entrusted with the activities for Holy Week as well as fundraising for them.⁸³

MANUAL LABOUR

The work on the band club's kitchen continued progressing and quotes were being collected for work on the music theory class, which was estimated to cost about €2,500.84

ONE OF THE FOUNDERS PASSES AWAY

Raymond Cutajar, one of the founders of the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa passed away on the 3rd of July after battling with illness. On the 5th of July, the Banda Birżebbuġa accompanied the funeral procession from Żaren Dalli Street to the church, where a mass was held presente cadavere and a funeral procession afterwards in front of the band club's premises in Birżebbuġa Street which ended in front of the HSBC bank for the funeral to continue privately.⁸⁵ The Cutajar family met with the Central Committee to give the band club a donation and waive the repayment for money that it had lent the band club.⁸⁶

BAD WEATHER AND ACCIDENTS DURING THE TITULAR FEAST

On the third day of the Tridum, whilst the band club's ground fireworks were being set up in Misraħ il-Knisja for the following day, an unfortunate incident occurred resulting in a member of the band club Godfrey Zammit being injured. Various members were present both from the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa and the Għaqda Mużikali San Pietru fil-Ktajjen who gave him first aid.⁸⁷ At the start of the march on the feast's eve, someone was also injured when a piece of metal which had come loose fell from the band club's artistic ornamental flaq.⁸⁸

After the ground fireworks were set off, various members and enthusiasts had to dismantle all the decorations because bad weather had been predicted for the day of the titular feaSt. Despite the celebrations continuing since Birżebbuġa wasn't affected by the rain, severe rainfall was experienced in several Maltese and Gozitan localities. As a precaution, the route for the procession with the titular statue was shortened. Hence the titular statue passed in front of the band club's premises twice.⁸⁹

- 82 Minutes 2018, Meeting 15, 14 th June 2018
- 83 Minutes 2018, Meeting 10, 4 th April 2018
- 84 Minutes 2018, Meeting 13, 14 th May 2018
- 85 Minutes 2018, Meeting 17, 11 th July 2018
- 86 Minutes 2018, Meeting 17, 11 th July 2018
- 87 As the author remembers it
- 88 As the author remembers it
- 89 As the author remembers it

TWO MUSICAL SERVICES ON THE SAME DAY

On the 11th of August 2018, the Banda Birżebbuġa had been invited for two musical services for the feast of Mary's Assumption. This resulted in a lot more work for the Band Commission to form two bands and organise the two services. On the day, the band honoured its service in Gudja as per usual and also performed for the first time for the feast of St Mary in Qrendi.⁹⁰

MUSIC THEORY LESSONS

Mro Robert Magro informed the Central Committee that he couldn't continue teaching music theory at the band club because of work.⁹¹ In the absence of a teacher, the lessons were suspended till October when Mro Christopher Bonnici was appointed as teacher.⁹² At the time, some of the band club's instrumentation was rented out to the Manoel Theatre.⁹³

INVITATIONS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Representatives from the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa were invited by the *Għaqda Storja u Kultura Birżebbuġa* for a mass and corteo which ended in the garden at St George's Bay for Victory Day on the 8th of September 2018. The Local Council invited the Banda Birżebbuġa together with the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen to participate in a massed band for Birżebbuġa Day. The Birżebbuġa Regatta Club also invited the massed band to perform at the Birżebbuġa Regatta on the 22nd of September 2018.⁹⁴ The organisers of the parish's *Milied fil-Pjazza* once again invited the band club to participate in the Christmas activity in 2018.⁹⁵

THE 2019 CENTRAL COMMITTEE

President Alexander Caruana retained his role once again assisted by Andy Mifsud, who also had the roles of Archivist and Assistant Public Relations Officer. Secretary General Henry Bonnici was assisted by Sephora Cutajar, whilst Treasurer Walter Pace was assisted by Nikita Caruana. Eman Farrugia was appointed Director General assisted by Jordi Zahra and Christopher Camilleri. Christopher Bonnici was appointed Director for Publications whilst Peter Paul Caruana was appointed band delegate, Jonathan Bonnici was appointed Public Relations Officer and lastly, Sue Pace was appointed Coordinator for Social Events. 96

ACTIVITIES WITH THE IMGARR BAND

In November 2018 two activities were held in collaboration with the Banda Marija Mtellgħa s-Sema from Imġarr. On the 4th of November a short concert was held at Imġarr, whilst

⁹⁰ Minutes 2018, Meeting 13, 14 th May 2018

⁹¹ Minutes 2018, Meeting 19, 22 nd August 2018

⁹² Minutes 2018, Meeting 19, 22 nd August 2018

⁹³ Minutes 2018, Meeting 19, 22 nd August 2018

⁹⁴ Minutes 2018, Meeting 21, 19 th September 2018

⁹⁵ Minutes 2018, Meeting 21, 19 th September 2018

⁹⁶ Minutes 2019, Meeting 1, 17 th October 2018

four days later, on the 8th of November, a concert was held at the premises of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa with the participation of musicians and pupils from the Imġarr. These activities were held as part of a project co-financed by Aġenzija Żgħażagħ.⁹⁷

CHRISTMAS 2018

On the 8th of December, the Banda Birżebbuġa together with the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen participated as a massed band during *Milied fil-Pjazza*. That day, the Republic's President of the day, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca visited the premises and signed the Visitors' Book. On the 20th of December, the Banda Birżebbuġa held the Christmas Home Concert in the Anthony Camilleri Hall. On the 23rd of December, the two local band clubs performed together for the mass of the last day of the Novena followed by a collaborative concert organised by the Local Council at the parish church. The following day, on Christmas Eve, the two local band clubs accompanied the procession with the Baby Jesus organised by the local *MUSEUM*. Birżebbuġa Street, the parvis and the area in front of the new part of the premises were once again decorated by the Commission for External Decorations and a Dinner Dance was held at a prominent hotel.⁹⁸

NEW KETTLEDRUMS

At the beginning of 2019, the Central Committee for the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa felt the need to invest in new professional kettle drums, operated by pedal. 99 On the 23rd of February, the day following the feast of Cathedra Petri the annual concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* was held at the Birżebbuġa Primary School Hall. The Banda Marija Mtellgħa s-Sema from Imġarr participated together with the Banda Birżebbuġa, under the direction of Musical Director Mro Michael Bugelli along with singers Riona Degiorgio, Mardy Farrugia and Clarissa Cauchi. Despite the bad weather, the concert still attracted a sizeable audience. On the 2nd of March 2019, the Banda Birżebbuġa together with the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen performed in the local Carnival organised by the Birżebbuġa Local Council. On the 11th of April, on the eve of the feast for Our Lady of Sorrows, a concert of funeral marches was held at the band club's main hall. 100

THE FEAST OF THE RISEN CHRIST

On Sunday the 21st of April, the Banda Birżebbuġa accompanied the statue of the Risen Christ with festive marches and waltzes. The Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar prepared some fireworks for the occasion. The statue had just returned from the restoration works done on it by Alfred and Aaron Camilleri Cauchi. A new platform had also been made for it. The works were financed using European funds under the scheme *Gal Xlokk*.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ ibid.

⁹⁸ Interview with Vice President Andy Mifsud

⁹⁹ As the author remembers it

¹⁰⁰ As the author remembers it

¹⁰¹ Minutes 2019, Meeting 8, 6 th February 2019

FESTA NAR

On the 10th of May 2019 a Fireworks Festival was held in Birżebbuġa with the participation of various firework organisations. The band club's firework section, the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar, was one of the participants. The event was held in Freeport Street.¹⁰²

A SPECIAL CONCERT

On the 17th of May 2019, the Banda Birżebbuġa under the direction of Mro Michael Bugelli held its first concert in Valletta. The concert was named *Il Concerto Nella Capitale* and was held at the Anglican Pro-Cathedral dedicated to Saint Paul. The new kettledrums were used for the first time. The concert commemorated various national anniversaries; 100 years from the Sette Giugno riots (1919-2019), 175 years from the construction of the Anglican Pro Cathedral (1844-2019), 55 years from Independence Day (1979-2019), 45 years since Malta became a Republic (1974-2019), 40 years from Freedom Day (1979-2019) and 15 years from Malta joining the European Union (2004-2019). The selected music for the concert was themed around British rule in Malta. Soprano Ruth Sammut Casingena performed alongside the Banda Birżebbuġa. 103

STRUCTURAL WORKS AND THE ELEVATOR

In June, structural work was done on the bar's new kitchen, a new gypsum ceiling was installed as well as water services and electricity for the band club's restaurant's kitchen.¹⁰⁴

The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa benefited from European funds under the scheme LEADER 2014-2020 administered by the Gal Xlokk Foundation and an elevator was installed. 105 After the concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri* in February, it was the Banda Birżebbuġa's turn to visit Imġarr for a concert at the oratorio together with the Banda Marija Mtellgħa as part of the Aġenzija Żgħażagħ project. 106

RESTORATION OF THE COLUMN FOR SAINT PETER

For the second day of the Tridum, during a procession with the band club's statue of Saint Peter, the column for the statue was unveiled after it had returned from restoration works done by Joe Caruana, Angelo, Joe and Daniel Cutajar and for the occasion of its 25th year. During the annual concert for the titular feast on the last day of the Tridum, the Commission entrusted with decorating the premises presented the band club with two new paintings depicting the martyrdom of Saint Peter and Saint Peter during the Transfiguration. 108

¹⁰² Interview with Vice President Andy Mifsud

¹⁰³ Minutes 2019, Meeting 12, 4 th April 2019

¹⁰⁴ Minutes 2019, Meeting 16, 12 th June 2019

¹⁰⁵ Minutes 2019, Meeting 24, 30 th October 2019

¹⁰⁶ Minutes 2019, Meeting 24, 30 th October 2019

¹⁰⁷ Minutes 2019, Meeting 14, 15 th May 2019

¹⁰⁸ Minutes 2019, Meeting 14, 15 th May 2019

APPROACHING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY

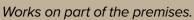
On the 29th of October, the Central Committee started a competition for a new logo to be made for the 30th anniversary of the official establishment of the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, in 2020.¹⁰⁹

CONCLUSION

Hence ended the 2019 administrative year, leading the Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa into 2020, the year of its 30th anniversary. The Central Committee planned for this year to be filled with a multitude of activities however little could be done because of the pandemic.









An activity in the Primary School yard.







A detail from the 'pavaljun' that was hung from the new part of the premises.





A phase from the construction works on the new building.



Festa Komunità 2015.



Festa Nar 2019. A part of it was done in Birżebbuġa.



Triq il-Port Hieles Triq il-Konvoj ta' Santa Marija (By-Pass)

At the end of the concert A Night at the Cathedral.



Fr Peter Ellul's first mass in Birżebbuġa.



Musical Director Michael Bugelli receiving Ġieħ Birżebbuġa in 2018.



Jason Vella receiving Ġieħ Birżebbuġa in 2018



In 2018 the balconies of the new part of the premises were decorated for the first time.



In 2018 due to bad weather the procession was shorter than usual. In this photo the statue of St Peter is passing in front the premises.



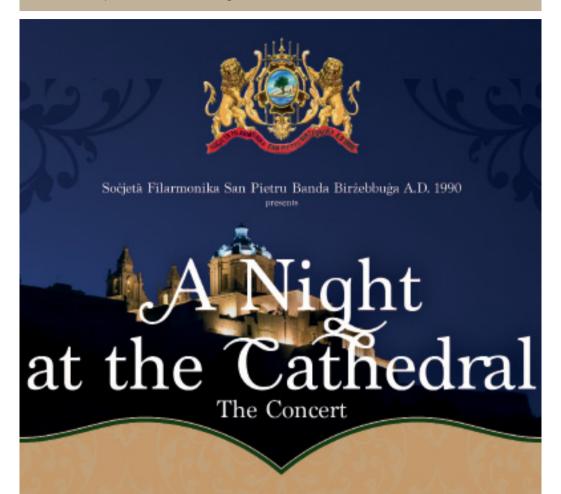
The demonstration with Baby Jesus passing in front of the premises accompanied by the two local band clubs.



Another part of the construction works to enlarge the premises. A lot of work was done by members, supporters and volunteers.



The official poster of the "A Night at the Cathedral" concert.

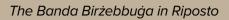


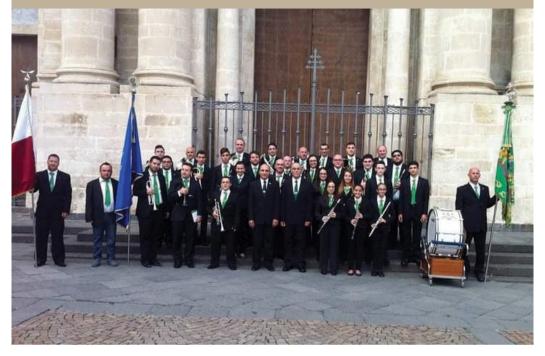
Mdina Metropolitan Cathedral Saturday 24th February 2018, 8pm

The Archangels

The Banda Birżebbuġa directed by Mro Michael Bugelli in the Mdina Cathedral.







The Banda Birżebbuġa during the concert in Riposto.



The Banda Birżebbuġa during the feast of Christ the King in Paola.



The Banda Birżebbuġa in Qrendi for the feast of the Assumption of Mary.



The Banda Birżebbuġa during the feast of the Assumption of Mary in Gudja.



The Banda Birżebbuġa in 2018 during the concert Virgini Perdolenti performing funeral marches in the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows, the first parish church of



The Banda Birżebbuġa during the feast of St Paul in Rabat.



The Banda Birżebbuġa in Imqabba for the feast of Our Lady of the Lily.



The Banda Birżebbuġa during the feast of St Augustine in Valletta.



The Banda Birżebbuġa during the festival organised by Aġenzija Żgħażagħ





Banda Birżebbuġa and Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen during the Christmas procession with Baby Jesus.



The Banda Birżebbuġa and the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen on 'Jum Birżebbuġa'.



The Banda Birżebbuġa and the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen doing a march for when Birżebbuġa won the 'regatta'.





The Banda Birżebbuġa and the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen during the Carnival celebrations in Birżebbuġa.





Local musicians cheering up the elderly during Christmas.



The Banda Birżebbuġa accompanying the titular statue of St Publius in Floriana.



The family of one of the founders, the late Raymond Cutajar, presenting a painting to the Band Club.



The twinning with the Banda Marija Mtellgħa s-Sema from Imġarr. Joseph Caruana, one of the founders, is today the Secretary General of the Imġarr Band Club.





The Opposition Leader Simon Busuttil visiting the Holy Week exhibitions.

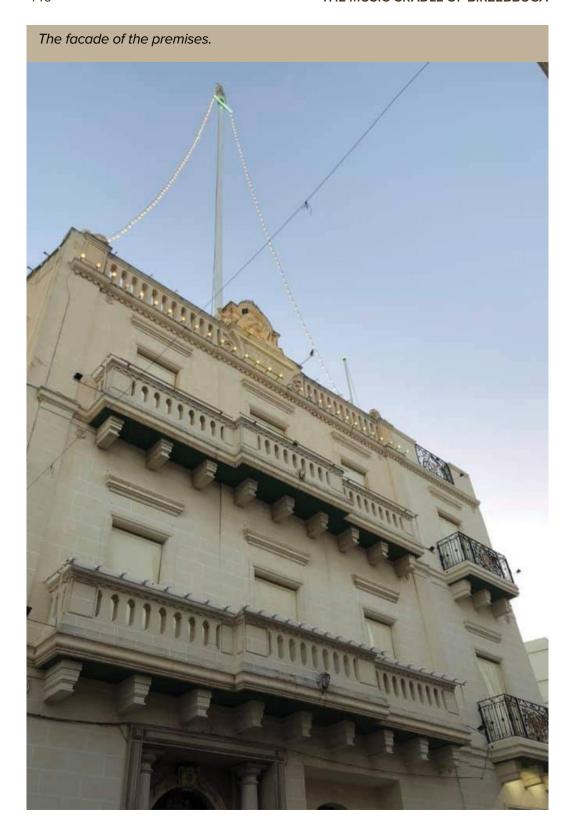




Another phase of the construction works on the extension of the premises.







The construction works nearly completed thanks to a lot of volunteers.



The facade of the premises in Misraħ il-Knisja decorated for the titular feaSt



Part of the trumpet libretto of the hymn Baħar ta' Fidi

Trumpet in Bb 1, 2 Bahar ta' Fidi

Imżanżan fl-Okkażjoni tal-1950 Ġubilew mill-Martirju ta' San Pietru Appostlu (67 - 2017 A.D.) kif ukoll fl-Okkażjoni tar-Ritorn lura f'Birżebbuga tal-Vara Titulari mir-Restawr tagħha.



Copyright © 2017 Sočjetá Filarmonika San Pietru Banda Biržebbuga A.D. 1990. All Rights Reserved. Ikkummissjonat u rregalat lis-Sočjetá minghand Josef Schembri u l-Familja Schembri



The presentation of the certificate by the Mayor of Floriana to the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar for the attained success.



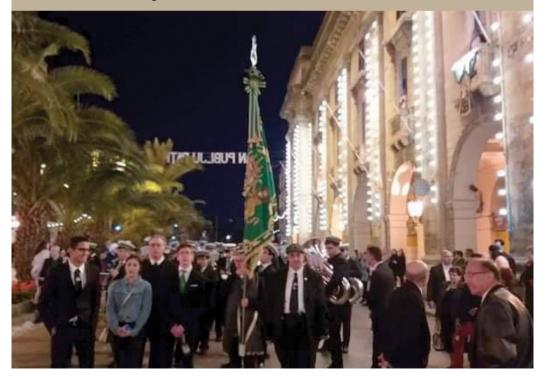
President Alexander Caruana with the Għaqda tal-Pawlini during the pilgrimage organised in 2017.



A bike pilgrimage during the feast week.



The Banda Birżebbuġa in Floriana for the feast of St Publius.



The President of the Republic of Malta meeting the statue bearers.



The President of the Republic Marie Louise Coleiro Preca welcomed in Pretty Bay at the start of the demonstration with the statue of St Peter.



The statue of Saint Peter before the demonstration by boat.



Professor Joseph Vella.







The Prime Minister meets the Parish Priest in the Band Club premises.



Hon. Owen Bonnici inaugurating one of the exhibitions organised by the Band Club.





The two local band clubs performing together during Milied fil-Pjazza



Statue bearers from Nadur and from Birżebbuġa during the feast of St Peter and St Paul in Nadur on the 26th of June.



Synchronized ground fireworks (it-tapit) ready for the 2019 feaSt



In Hal Safi for the St Paul's pilgrimage in 2017.



The two groups of statue bearers with the statue of St Peter during the demonstration on the boat.



The painting showing the liberation of Saint Peter from prison in the main hall of the premises.







The Youth Section's lion during the festive march.



The emblem of the Sezzjoni Żgħażagħ Iljuni.



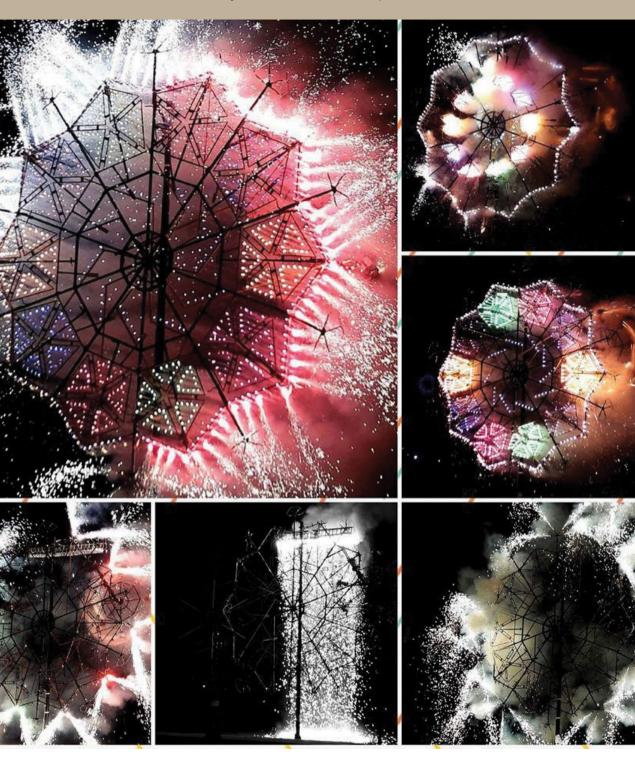
The artistic imrewħa and bandalora, a project by the Kummissjoni Armar Estern and the Sezzjoni Żgħażagħ Iljuni respectively.



The Artistic Fan (L-Imrewħa) in 2016.



Ground fireworks made by members of the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar.



The statue of St Peter, property of the band club, in-front of St Augustine Parish Church in Valletta.



The statue of St Peter in Rabat during the pilgrimage.



The statue of St Peter, property of the band club, and the statue of the Conversion of Saint Paul from Hal Safi, in Rabat on the 29th of June 2017.





The inauguration of the facade decorations in Misraħ il-Knisja in 2017

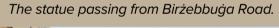


The Flag of Honour of the Band Club during Festa Komunità at St Benedict's College.



The statue of St Peter, known as 'iż-Żgħir' (the small one) in front the premises on the 29th of June 2017







The representatives and the Musical Director of the Banda Birżebbuġa at the Anglican Cathedral of St Paul.



The Representatives, the Musical Director, the singers and the Banda Birżebbuġa after the concert A Night at the Cathedral



Laura Gauci Cunningham who presented most of the concerts held by the band club.



Lejla Familja at the Primary School.



Members of the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar celebrating their success in Floriana.



Mro Robert Magro and President Alexander Caruana



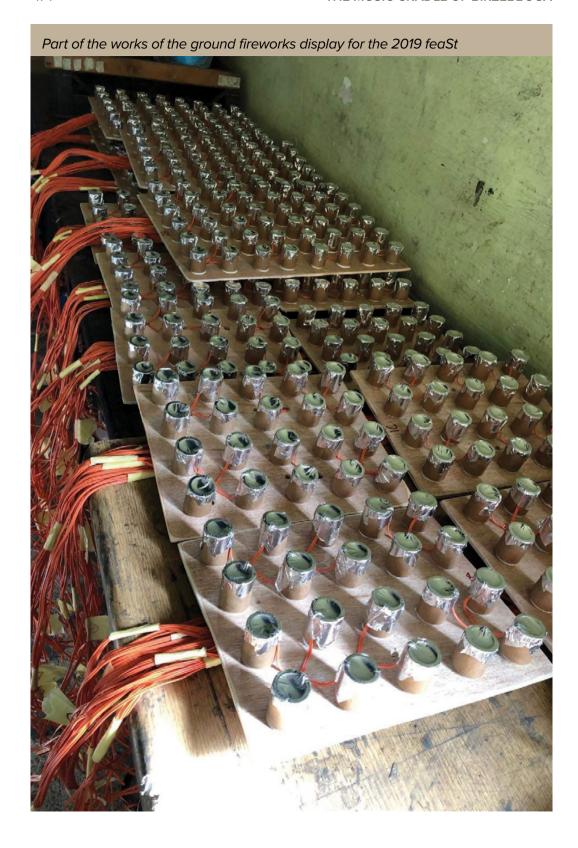




Part of the actors of Virgini Perdolenti under the direction of Steven Farrugia during Holy Week.



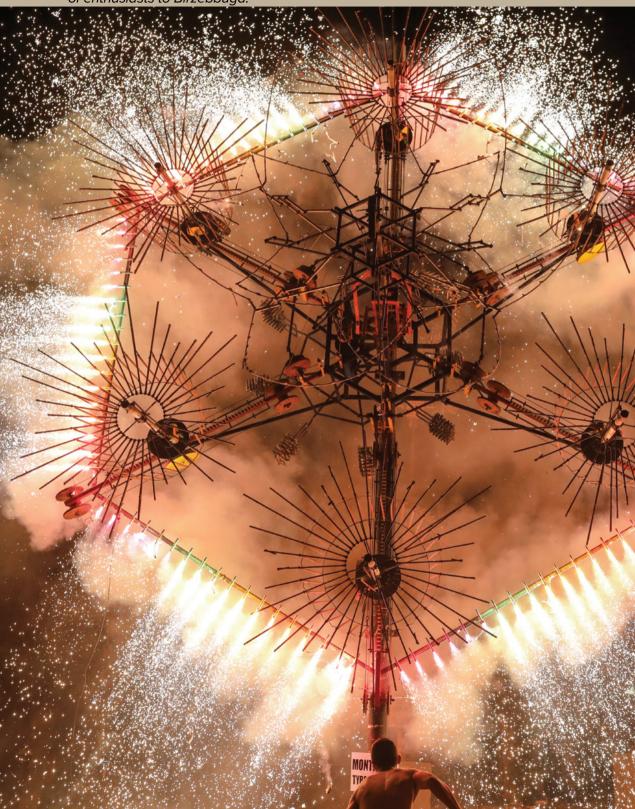








One of the spectacular mechanical ground fireworks (raddiena) that attracts lots of enthusiasts to Birżebbuġa.



Presenting a memento to Fr. Roderick Camilleri at the end of his service as vice Parish PrieSt





Presenting Fr. Carlo Calleja a gift for the occasion of his Ordination.



An exchange of gifts in Riposto



One of the paintings presented by the Kummissjoni Tisbiħ tal-Każin



During an exhibition in Santa Venera



The statue of St Peter in front of the newly completed extension of the premises in 2018.





Ground fireworks in 2018





Some of the fireworks for the 2018 feaSt



14

THE YEAR 2020: THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY AND THE PANDEMIC IMPACT

he 2020 administrative year had to be a special year for the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa since on the 14th of January it was to celebrate its 30th Anniversary. Therefore in October 2019, during the Annual General Meeting, a Central Committee was appointed to take care of and plan the celebration's activities and the work for the next year.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2020

President Alexander Caruana, one of the founders, was assisted by Andy Mifsud who was also the Assistant Treasurer and ArchiviSt Secretary Henry Bonnici was assisted by Eman Farrugia who was also the representative for the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar, while Walter Pace remained the Treasurer. Angelo Cutajar was the Director General assisted by Daniel Cutajar and Ryan Micallef, while Sue Pace was the Co-ordinator for the Social Activities. Jonathan Bonnici was the Public Relations Officer while Christopher Bonnici was the Director for Publications. Peter Paul Caruana was appointed as the band delegate.¹

During the AGM, the logo that was going to be used by the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa during the anniversary year 2000, was approved by the members.²

¹ Minutes 2020, Meeting 1, 26 th November 2019

² Minutes of the AGM 2020; 17 th November 2019

INSTALLATION OF THE ELEVATOR

The first project was the installation of the elevator in the premises, financed with EU funds after applying with the *Gal Xlokk* scheme.³

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa thought of organising several activities for the Christmas festivities. On the 15th of December 2019, the first day of the Novena, after the evening mass, the Birżebbuġa Local Council in collaboration with the parish and the two local band clubs organised the *Concerto di Natale* at the Parish Church.

On the 23rd of December 2019, the Christmas Home Concert was held in the Anthony Camilleri Main Hall. The Banda Birżebbuġa was under the direction of Musical Director Mro.Michael Bugelli. At the end of this concert, President Alexander Caurana launched the logo that was chosen during the AGM by the members. The design of the 30th Anniversary logo was done by Andre Gatt and was chosen after a competition with another three designs.

Assistant Musical Director Charles Wallace Suda was gifted a thanksgiving memento and gift since this was his last year with the band club after long years of service.⁴

The traditional Dinner Dance was organised in a renowned hotel, while on Christmas Eve, the Banda Birżebbuġa and the Banda San Pietru fil-Ktajjen accompanied the traditional procession of Baby Jesus organised by the *Soċjetà tal-MUSEUM* along the streets of Birżebbuġa.⁵

A NEW ASSISTANT MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Mro Charles Wallace Suda ceased being the Assistant Musical Director starting from the 1st of January 2020. Therefore the Central Committee chose Mro Christopher Bonnici, a local musician who was already teaching music theory with the band club, as the new Assistant Musical Director. His debut in directing the Banda Birżebbuga was on the 29th of February 2020 during the annual concert *Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri*.6

NEW TEACHER FOR WOODWIND INSTRUMENTS

Starting from the 1st of January 2020, the Central Committee chose Mro Ludwig Noel Desira, a local musician, to be the new teacher of the woodwind instruments.⁷ Therefore the school of music was composed of Mro Michael Bugelli, the Musical Director and teacher of brass instruments, Mro Christopher Bonnici, Assistant Musical Director and teacher of

³ Minutes 2020, Meeting 2, 9 th December 2019

⁴ Interview with Vice President Andy Mifsud

⁵ Interview with Vice President Andy Mifsud

⁶ Minutes 2020, Meeting 1, 26 th November 2019

⁷ Minutes 2020, Meeting 1, 26 th November 2019

music theory, and Mro Ludwig Noel Desira, the teacher of woodwind instruments.

30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Most members and supporters wished to celebrate a mass at the premises to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the foundation of the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa. The Central Committee requested this in a formal letter and the permit was given. So, on the 14th of January, a mass was celebrated in the main hall by Parish Priest Can. Anton Galea-Scannura. Marisa Cutajar and the Xmun Pietru Choir animated the mass. Afterwards, there was a reception and a cake was shared among those who attended.⁸

ANNUAL CONCERT

On the 29th of February 2020, the annual concert Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri was held in the primary school hall. Besides the Banda Birżebbuġa directed by Mro Michael Bugelli, there were also musicians from the Banda Marija Mtellgħa s-Sema from Imġarr as part of a project by Aġenzija Żgħażagħ. During this event, a narrative about St Peter written by Raymond Vella Gregory was read by Marthese Grech and Emanuel Mangion. At the end of the concert two new ornamental flags (bandalori), to be used for Easter and other Eucharistic feasts, were exhibited for the first time by Kummissjoni Armar Estern.9

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The ornamental flags were to be used for the first time on Sunday 12th April, Easter Sunday. Everything had been planned, however, on the 7th of March, the first case of COVID-19 was registered in Malta. As a precaution, the Central Committee decided to halt physical lessons in music theory at the band club premises. However, these music lessons continued to be delivered online. On the 18th of March both the bar of the premises and Bar Nineteen Ninety had to close their doors. All band clubs in Malta had to close down. Therefore for that year the exhibitions and concerts for Holy Week as well as the demonstrations with the statue of the Risen Christ were cancelled. The meetings of the Central Committee were also held online so that everyone could remain safe at home.

RENOVATION WORKS

Respecting all the restrictions imposed by the Health authorities, some members seized the opportunity of the premises being closed to the public and took the initiative to begin certain works that had been needed for quite a long time on the ground floor of the building. These works included a new gypsum ceiling, the bar was moved to a more central place, a new kitchen, new sanitary facilities and a new niche to host the statue of St Peter Apostle

⁸ As the author remembers it

⁹ Minutes 2020, Meeting 3, 8 th January 2020

¹⁰ Minutes 2020, Meeting 6, 8 th April 2020

¹¹ Minutes 2020, Meeting 6, 8 th April 2020

¹² Minutes 2020, Meeting 6, 8 th April 2020

¹³ Minutes 2020, Meeting 6, 8 th April 2020

all year long.¹⁴ The storeroom was also cleared while a wall and a ceiling were demolished and a room was built instead. Hence the place became more spacious. All this work was done thanks to EU funds after applying with the *Gal Xlokk* scheme.¹⁵

OUR LADY OF THE HOLY DOCTRINE

When the Health authorities started removing certain restrictions, some villages started organising pilgrimages. The Banda Birżebbuġa was one of the first to participate in such pilgrimages, in Tarxien for the feast of Our Lady of the Holy Doctrine. The Banda Birżebbuġa accompanied the pilgrimage with several Marian Hymns.¹⁶

TITULAR FEAST PUBLICATION

The annual publication *Minn Qalb I-Iljuni* was published during the pandemic too, however with fewer pages than usual.¹⁷

TITULAR FEAST 2020

Discussions were held between the two music entities in Birżebbuga and it was decided to plan a reduced amount of external activities. These included a barbecue in Birżebbuġa Street on Thursday 30th July. The traditional pilgrimage on the boat with the statue of Saint Peter was planned to leave from the Grand Harbour since it was the 30th Anniversary of the band club. Once ashore, the statue was planned to be carried around the town accompanied by the band and finally mounted on top of a pedestal. During this activity, it was also planned to collect donations for the Community Chest Fund. A march along the streets of Birżebbuġa by the two band clubs performing together was planned to be held on the eve of the titular feaSt Ground fireworks were ready to be fired on the church parvis too. The two band clubs also planned to accompany the statue of Saint Peter on Sunday as one band.¹⁸

THE FEAST IS CANCELLED

Towards the end of July, the cases of COVID-19 started increasing again. The external activities planned for Sunday, Monday and Tuesday were held, but the Central Committee had to decide to cancel the external activities from Wednesday onwards.¹⁹ The barbecue planned on Thursday was transferred and instead of being done in the street, it was done on the roof of the premises.²⁰ On Thursday, the Central Committee held a meeting to address this matter with urgency and with a sense of responsibility cancelled all the activities including the ground firework display that had already been set up on the church

¹⁴ Minutes 2020, Meeting 6, 8 th April 2020

¹⁵ Minutes 2020, Meeting 11, 14 th July 2020

¹⁶ ibid

¹⁷ Interview with Vice President Andy Mifsud

¹⁸ Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (2020); Annual Pubblication for the Titular feast, p.38-39

¹⁹ Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (2020); Annual Pubblication for the Titular feast, p.38-39

²⁰ Minn Qalb I-Iljuni (2020); Annual Pubblication for the Titular feast, p.38-39

parvis by the members.

On Friday 31st July 2020 a meeting was held with the Parish Priest and the other local band club. The two musical entities explained to Fr. Anton that it was going to be very difficult to form a band for the pilgrimage since many musicians were afraid to attend. On the eve of the titular feast, the Bishops of Malta and Gozo issued a statement to cancel all the pilgrimages and urged people to adhere to the health authorities' directives.

On Saturday 1st August, H.E. Mgr. Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna celebrated a mass and consecrated the new marble altar, the work of artisan Ronnie Pisani, as well as the ambone and the celebrant's chair that were gifted to the parish by architect Michael Schembri, Honorary President of the Band Club. A delegation from the Central Committee was present for this occasion and also on Sunday 2nd of August when a solemn mass was celebrated, always respecting all the indications and restrictions given by health authorities.

MALTA INTERNATIONAL FIREWORKS FESTIVAL

On the 7th of August 2020, the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar participated in the Malta International Fireworks Festival that was held in the Grand Harbour.²¹

RESTORATION OF THE MAIN FLAGPOLE

On the 21st of September 2020, some members and volunteers lowered the main flagpole on the roof of the premises so that it could undergo restoration work.²²

OTHER WORK

Thanks to the VOPS scheme an air conditioning system was installed in the Mro. Michael Bugelli Rehearsal Hall, in St George Preca Committee Hall, in the office of the Secretary General and the Anthony Camilleri Main Hall. A ramp near the main door of the building to facilitate the entrance and exit of wheelchair-bound persons was planned. The stairs' handrail in the new part of the premises was also done.²³

RESTORATING THE STATUE OF SAINT PETER

On the 26th of September, the statue of St Peter, property of the band club was taken for restoration works at Aaron Camilleri Cauchi studio, son of Cav. Alfred Camilleri Cauchi who had made the statue back in 1991. These works were possible thanks to EU funds under the Gal Xlokk scheme.²⁴

SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM

In December 2020 solar panels were installed on the roof of the premises thanks to a

²¹ ibid.

²² Minutes 2020, Meeting 15, 10 th September 2020

²³ ibid.

²⁴ ibid.

scheme offered by the Government of Malta to promote the use of renewable energy sources among voluntary organisations.²⁵

A NEW RESTAURANT

After completing the works on the bar, the Malta Tourism Authority issued the licence permitting the bar to also operate as a restaurant. The new restaurant was named *Bottega San Pietro*.²⁶

NEW INSTRUMENTS

Using funds from Aġenzija Żgħażagħ, a concert bass drum, concert cymbal with a stand, suspended cymbals, bongos and finger cymbals were ordered to encourage the teaching of percussion instruments to youths.²⁷ The Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government, in collaboration with the Malta Arts Council and the Malta Band Clubs Association, issued a fund intended to be used by band clubs to purchase new instruments. The Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa benefited from this scheme and bought its first baritone saxophone for student and local musician Matthew Polidano who was learning how to play it with a specialised teacher.²⁸

DIVO PETRO - ORATORIO

When an academy was presented for the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the band club, local musician Josef Schembri had suggested to President Alexander Caruana that the band club should have an Oratorio in its music archives. The idea was approved by the Central Committee but although various funding applications were submitted, these were not accepted. Finally, thanks to the "Financial Help for Band Clubs Scheme" as part of the Implemented Collaboration and Strengthening Program, administered by the Malta Band Clubs Association with the Malta Arts Council within the same Ministry of Justice and Local Councils, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa obtained the necessary funds for this Oratorio.²⁹

An Oratorio is a large-scale musical composition on a sacred subject, for solo voices, chorus, and orchestra. *Divo Petro*, the name of the Oratorio, is based on the life of Saint Peter the Apostle. The Central Committee contacted two persons who had already written and composed Oratorios for other Maltese band clubs: Maltese composer Ray Sciberras composed the music whilst poet Sebastian Saliba wrote the lyrics. The premiere of this Oratorio was supposed to be on Saturday 8th November 2020 at the Metropolitan Cathedral of St Paul in Imdina. However, it had to be cancelled because of the pandemic,

²⁵ Minutes 2020, Meeting 22, 17 th December 2020

²⁶ ibid.

²⁷ ibid

²⁸ ibid.

²⁹ ibid.

but the necessary plans were made to be able to present this Oratorio in 2021.30

LEGAL CONSULTANT DR BERNARD GRECH

On Monday 5th of October 2020, lawyer Dr Bernard Grech was elected to the Maltese Parliament as the new Opposition leader. The band club felt proud that a person from Birżebbuġa occupies such a high constitutional role.³¹

CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2021

Since this publication ends with the 30th Anniversary of Socjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa, this last chapter is dedicated to the continuation that the band club is looking ahead to.

The Annual General Meeting was held at the beginning of 2021 instead of November 2020 due to the restrictions of the pandemic. Alexander Caruana retained his role as President assisted by Andy Caruana who also served as ArchiviSt Henry Bonnici kept the role of Secretary General assisted by Paul Gafa who was also the Co-ordinator for the Applications and representative of the Commission for external decorations.

Christopher Bonnici, apart from being Assistant Musical Director and teacher of music theory, was also elected Assistant Secretary and Archivist and kept his role as Director for Publications. Walter Pace was the Treasurer assisted by Marouska Bonnici and Christopher Camilleri. Peter Paul Caruana was the band delegate, while Angelo Cutajar was the Director General assisted by John Taylor. Eman Farrugia was the Director for maintenance works assisted by Benji Caruana, whilst Nicola Bonnici Mc Intyre was the representative for the Youth Section, Sezzjoni Żgħażagħ Iljuni. Eman Farrugia was the reprentative for the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar, Emanuel Mangion was responsible for the Commission for the embellishment of the premises, Steven Farrugia was responsible for the Theatrical Group 14 ta' Jannar. Jonathan Bonnici was the Public Relations Officer and lastly Mary Taylor was the representative for the Women Helpers.³²

FROM THE COMPOSER'S PEN (MILL-PINNA TAL-KOMPOŻITURI)

During the pandemic, the Philarmonic Society still wanted to remain in contact with its members and supporters. The Public Relations Officer, Jonathan Bonnici, together with Secretary Henry Bonnici contacted Assistant Musical Director Christopher Bonnici, who already had experience in radio programmes, and asked him if he was interested in starting streaming a live programme of festive marches once a week from the premises on the band club's Facebook page. He accepted and the first programme was streamed on Saturday 30th January 2021. Together with the presenter Christopher Bonnici, Jonathan Bonnici and Andy Mifsud offered to take care of the technical part. Initially, it was intended

³⁰ ibid.

³¹ Minutes 2020, Meeting 17, 6 th October 2020

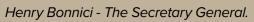
³² Minutes 2021, Meeting 1, 20 th February 2021

to stream this programme only in February, on the occasion of the feast of Cathedra Petri, but it was so well acclaimed by the followers that it was extended till the Holy Week. Once again there were demands to continue this programme and hence it was decided to continue streaming it every Saturday at 3:00 pm till the titular feast in AuguSt During Lent, programmes with funeral marches were streamed whilst for Easter a programme of waltzes was streamed. There were also special programmes, like on Good Friday and Easter Sunday, but especially on Sunday 21st of February 2021, when the statue of Saint Peter, property of the band club, arrived back from the restoration works by artists Alfred and Aaron Camilleri Cauchi.

CONCLUSION

Although there were restrictions due to the pandemic, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa continued working and celebrated its 30th anniversary in the best possible way. When hopefully everyone returns to normal life again, the Soċjeta Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa will be there again, as it had been during the last thirty years. Still being the cradle of the people of Birżebbuġa; a music, religious, social and cultural cradle. Above all, being the natural choice for those living in Birżebbuġa, who shared with them bad and difficult times, but mostly good, satisfactory and enjoyable moments, always guided by the Prince of the Apostles, the loved patron saint, St Peter the Apostle, liberated from chains.









Mro Michael Bugelli - The Musical Director of the Banda Birżebbuġa from the day of its establishment.

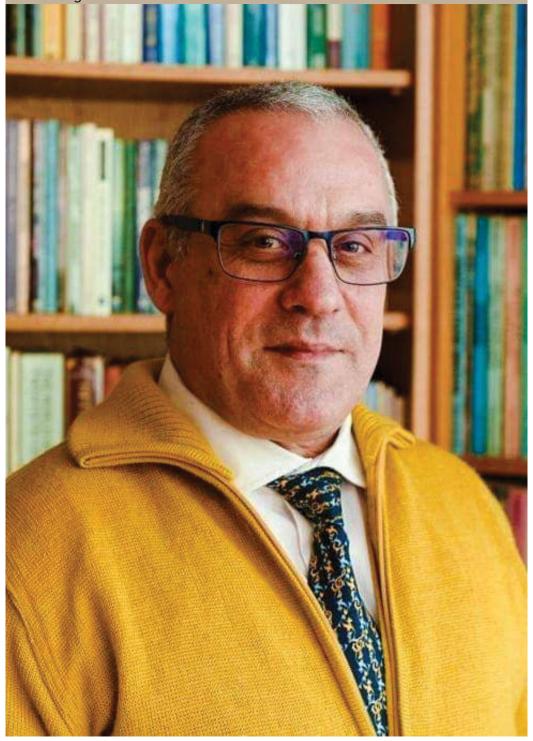


Mro Christopher Bonnici - Assistant Musical Director, Teacher of Music Theory and the Editor.

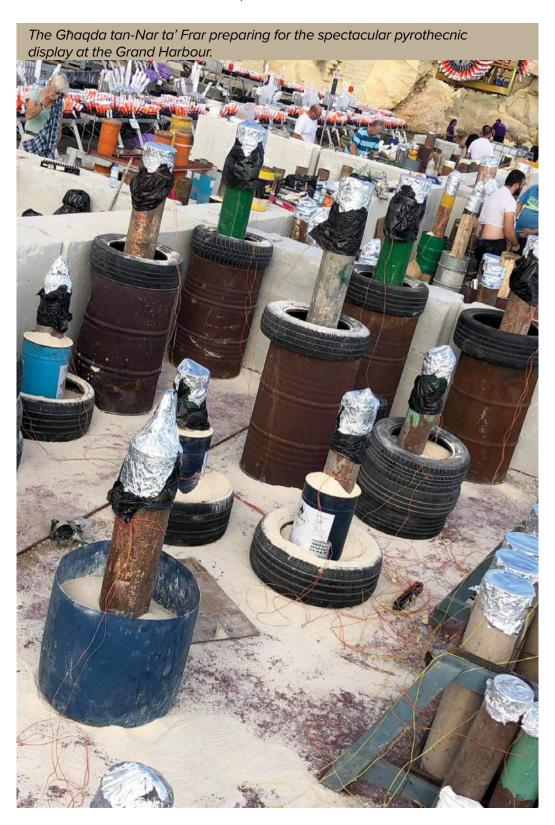




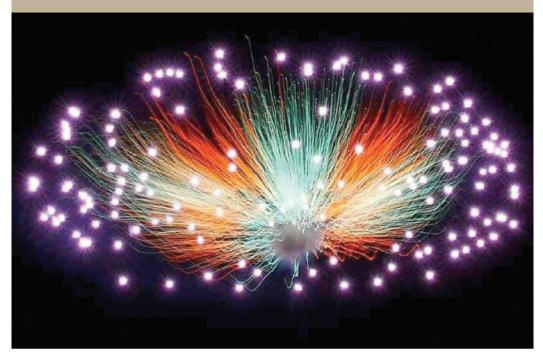
Mro Ray Sciberras - The composer of Oratorio Divo Petro and Honorary Musical Director of the Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa



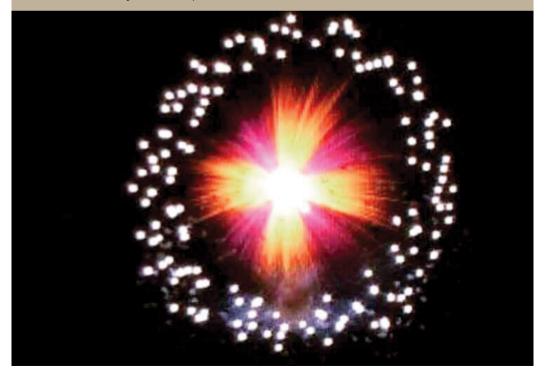
500 Part of the instrumentation in 2020. PREMIER



Fireworks at the Grand Harbour.



More fireworks by the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar.





More spectacular shots of the work by the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar.



Some of the members of the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar at the Grand Harbour.



The concert 'Mill-Bandisti għall-Membri' in the Primary School Hall.



Renovation works on the ground floor of the premises when it was closed because of the pandemic.



The Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru, Banda Birżebbuġa receiving various funds.



Works during the installation of the elevator





Renovation works on the bar by various volunteers.



More photos of the renovation works done by lots of volunteers during the pandemic.



The statue of St Peter property of the band club returned from restoration works on Sunday the 21st of February 2021.



The logo for the 30th Anniversary.



An aerial view of 'Ġawhra ta' San Pietru'.



The Banda Birżebbuġa on the 19th of July 2020 in Tarxien.



The Banda Birżebbuġa at Tarxien during the feast of Our Lady of Holy Doctrine in 2020.



The traditional 'fjakkolata' on Maundy Thursday.



The fireworks made by the Għaqda tan-Nar 22 ta' Frar which were fired at the Grand Harbour.





The President of the Republic Marie Louise Coleiro Preca signing the Visitors' Book in 2017.



President Alexander Caruana representing the Band Club during the presentation of funds from the Good Causes Fund



The President of the Republic with representatives from the Central Committee and the statue bearers in 2017.



During the pandemic, music theory lessons were delivered online.









Joe Gatt - The first honorary musician of the Band Club.





The statement issued by the Central Committee, responsibly cancelling the feast activities due to the pandemic.



Socjetà Filarmonika San Pietru Banda Birżebbuga A.D. 1990

30 ta' Luliu 2020

Stqarrija Ufficjali

Il-Kumitat Eżekuttiv wara li ddiskuta I-iżviluppi ta' dawn I-aħħar jiem b'konnessjoni mal-Covid-19 qiegħed ufficjalment jikkancella I-attivitajiet esterni kollha organizzati mis-Socjetà li kienu ser jibdew minn għada għall-festa ta' San Pietru Appostlu li kellha ssir fi tmiem din il-gimgħa.

Inhossu li fid-dawl tas-sitwazzjoni preżenti hija dećizjoni ghaqlija biex nissalvagwardjaw is-saħħa ta' kulħadd, dećizjoni li ma kienet faċli għal ħadd.

F'isem il-Kumitat Eżekuttiv nirringrazzjaw lill-membri u l-volontiera kollha li baqaghu u ghadhom jahdmu ghall-gid tas-Socjetà. Nappellaw lil kulhadd sabiex jiehu hsieb sahhtu u sahhet haddiehor.

Henry Bonnici Segretarju Generali

Soċjetà Filarmonika San Pietru

Banda Birżebbuġa

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

THE FOUNDERS OF THE SOCJETÀ FILARMONIKA SAN PIETRU, BANDA BIRZEBBUGA

Anthony Camilleri Alexander Caruana Joseph Caruana Angelo Cutajar Raymond Cutajar Jason Vella

APPENDIX II

HONORARY STRUCTURE OF THE SOĆJETÀ FILARMONIKA SAN PIETRU, BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA

HONORARY PRESIDENT AD VITAM, FOUNDER AND MAIN BENEFACTOR

2000 - Anthony Camilleri

HONORARY PRESIDENTS AD VITAM

1994-1998 - Patrick Gabaretta
2004 - Joe Schembri
2004-2011 - Grazio Pullicino
2007 - Joe Tagliaferro
2018 - Jason Vella
2018 - Emanuel Zammit
2018 - Simon Micallef

HONORARY PRESIDENTS

1990-2003 -Joe Schembri 1990-2011 -**Emanuel Portelli** 1990-1993 Dr Jose Herrera 1990-2001 John Polidano

Magistrate Dr Patrick Vella 1990-1993

1991-2006 Joe Tagliaferro 1991-1993 Patrick Gabaretta Dr Satya Brata Das 1992-1997

1996 Architect Michael Schembri

1997 Peter Camilleri 2001 Dr Henry Antoncich 2002-2013 Dr Bernard Grech Paul Polidano 2003

2004 Judge Dr Joseph Azzopardi

Lonzu Vella 2006-2017 Simon Micallef 2008 Peter Camilleri 2008 Victor Schembri

2009 Chev. Derek Mifsud Speranza

2014-2017 Jason Vella

2018 Dr Marylin Sultana 2018 Jason Cutajar 2019 Roderick Cachia 2019 Charles Ellul 2021 Frans Cassar 2021 Steve Briffa

HONORARY MEMBERS

1990-2008 -Peter Camilleri 1990-1999 -Silvio Portelli 1993 Sunny Bonnici 1994-2000 -Frans Cassar 1996-2008 -Victor Schembri 1999 Pawlu Schembri 2000-2011 Frances Tabone 2000-2009 -Peter Camilleri 2003 Francis Cassar Carmelo Galea 2003

Joe Cutajar 2005-2009 -Chev. Derrek Mifsud Speranza

Tarcisio Bongailas 2008-2009 -

2004

2015 Tarcisio Bongailas 2016 **Emanuel Mangion** 2017 Dennis Micallef Mikiel Schembri 2017 Steve Briffa 2018-2020 -Pierre Zammit 2018 2019 Marco Camilleri 2021 Benii Caruana 2021 Andre` Taylor Thaddeo Agius 2021 2021 Aiden Vella Simon Galea 2021 2021 Eman Farrugia John Taylor 2021 2021 **Daniel Cutajar**

HONORARY MUSICAL DIRECTORS

1997 - Mro Felicienne Paris

B.Ed(Hons); L(Mus)LCM; A(Mus)TCL; A(Mus)LCM

2003 - Mro Paul Buttigieg

ALCM; A(Mus)LCM

2016 - Mro Gennaro Sibilano
 2020 - Mro Ray Sciberras FLCM

HONORARY MUSICIANS

2019 - Joe Gatt

APPENDIX III

THE ADMINISTRATORS OF THE SOCJETÀ FILARMONIKA SAN PIETRU, BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA

PRESIDENTS

 1990-2000
 Anthony Camilleri

 2000-2005
 Simon Micallef

 2005-2013
 Jason Vella

 2014
 Emanuel Zammit

2014 - Alexander Caruana

GENERAL SECRETARIES

1990-1993 - Alexander Caruana 1994-1997 - Alex Azzopardi 1997-2000 - Stefan Zammit 2000-2003 - Joseph Caruana 2003-2007 - Johan Briffa 2007-2010 - Roderick Cachia

2010-2011 - Robert Baldacchino 2011-2012 - Johan Briffa

2011-2012 - Johan Briffa 2012 - Henry Bonnici

TREASURERS

1990-1991 - Jason Vella1992-2004 - Grazio Pullicino2004-2011 - Walter Pace

2011-2013 - Robert Baldacchino

2014 - Walter Pace

APPENDIX IV

MUSICAL STRUCTURE OF THE SOCJETÀ FILARMONIKA SAN PIETRU, BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA

MUSICAL DIRECTOR

1990 - Mro Michael Bugelli ATCL

ASSISTANT MUSICAL DIRECTORS

1990-1991 - Mro Joe L. Vella
 1991-1992 - Mro Simon Farrugia
 1992-1997 - Mro Felicienne Paris

B.Ed(Hons); L(Mus)LCM; A(Mus)TCL; A(Mus)LCM

1992-2019 - Mro Charles Wallace Suda
 2020 - Mro Christopher Bonnici
 B.A.(Hons); M.A.; ALCM; LLCM

TEACHERS

1997-2013 - Mro Stephanie Barbara

2014-2018 - Mro Robert Magro L(Mus)LCM

2018 - Mro Christopher Bonnici

B.A.(Hons); M.A.; ALCM; LLCM

2020 - Mro Ludwig N. Desira

APPENDIX V

MUSICIANS OF THE SOCJETÀ FILARMONIKA SAN PIETRU, BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA

SENA		ISEM	STRUMENT
1990	-	Alexander Caruana	Percussion
1990	-	Rocco Zahra	Drums
1990	-	Spiridione Camilleri	Drums
1990	-	Johan Polidano	Clarinet
1990	-	Felicienne Paris	Flute
1990	-	Eman Camilleri	Clarinet
1990	-	Vincent Mifsud	Trombone
1991	-	Joseph Caruana	Glockenspeil
1991	-	Alfred Piscopo	Trumpet
1991	-	Michael Vella	Trumpet
1991	-	Johann Briffa	Euphonium
1991	-	Emanuel Mangion	Tuba
1991	-	Joe Theuma	Cymbal
1991	-	Henry Bonnici	Drums
1991	-	Tanya Aguis	Clarinet
1991	-	Romina Zammit	Clarinet
1991	-	Georganne Farrugia	Clarinet
1991	-	Marvin Lee Cassar	Clarinet
1991	-	Charmaine Zammit	Clarinet
1991	-	Lydia Tabone	Clarinet
1991	-	Joe Gatt	Bass Drum
1991	-	Ruth Caruana	Clarinet
1991	-	Roderick Cachia	Trumpet
1991	-	Kevin Barun	Trumpet
1991	-	Ruth Camilleri	Clarinet
1992	-	Sefora Grech	Drums
1992	-	Chris Paris	Trombone
1992	-	Carmen Camilleri	Clarinet
1992	-	Bertie Parnis	Trombone
1992	-	Wayne Gatt	Trumpet
1992	-	Franz Brincat	Trumpet
1992	-	Jeffrey Curmi	French Horn
1992	-	Charlo Buhagiar	Alto Sax
1993	-	Trudy Taylor	Clarinet
1993	-	Karen Scerri	Clarinet
1993	-	Jurgen Camilleri	Althorn

1993	-	Claudette Camilleri	Clarinet
1993	-	Noel Theuma	Trumpet
1994	-	Stephanie Barbara	Clarinet
1994	-	Michella Coleiro	Clarinet
1994	-	Pamela Saliba	Clarinet
1994	-	Rosanne Mercieca	Clarinet
1994	-	Josef Schembri	Trumpet
1994	-	Lisa Galea	Clarinet
1994	-	Josette Gatt	Clarinet
1995	-	Aaron Caruna	Clarinet
1995	-	Neil Schembri	Clarinet
1995	-	Christabel Schembri	Clarinet
1995	-	Stanley Abela	Tuba
1995	-	Stephen McKeon	Trumpet
1995	-	Roderick Zammit	French Horn
1995	-	Christian Zahra	Drums
1995	-	Karen Theuma	Clarinet
1996	-	Jean Paul Calleja	Drums
1996	-	Marlin Schembri	Clarinet
1996	-	Maria Muscat	Clarinet
1996	-	Tatiana Sestito	Clarinet
1996	-	Rose Fava	Clarinet
1996	-	Daniel Attard	Alto Sax
1996	-	Cliff Macelli	Trumpet
1996	-	Svetlana Abela	Clarinet
1996	-	Mike Fava	Trumpet
1998	-	Samantha Briffa	Clarinet
1998	-	Justin Vella	Clarinet
1998	-	Maria Claudia Farrugia	Alto Sax
1998	-	Andy Mifsud	Clarinet
1998	-	Paul Farrugia	Clarinet
1998	-	Kristian Cassar	Trombone
1999	-	Clare Barbara	Clarinet
1999	-	Stephanie Farrugia	Clarinet
1999	-	Clinton Schembri	Alto Sax
2000	-	Maria Dolores Barbara	Alto Sax
2001	-	Monalisa Aquilina	Clarinet
2001	-	Nathalie Marie Grima	Clarinet
2001	-	Cluadia Chircop	Clarinet
2001	-	Kersty-Anne Fenech	Clarinet
2001	-	Janice Zahra	Clarinet
2002	-	Jonathan Aguis	Trumpet

2002	-	Suzanne Azzopardi	Trumpet
2002	-	Luke Portelli	Trumpet
2003	-	Kurt Aguis	Trumpet
2003	-	Aaron Abdilla	Alto Sax
2005	-	Simon Schembri	Trumpet
2006	-	Lee-Ryan Darmanin	Drums
2007	-	Francesco Barbara	Trumpet
2008	-	Etienne Zahra	Trumpet
2008	-	Gianluca Lia	Flute
2009	-	Jean Claude Ciantar	Althorn
2009	-	Matthew Caruana	Clarinet
2009	-	Daniela Chircop	Clarinet
2009	-	Jake Darmanin	Glockenspiel
2009	-	Jonathan Bonnici	Drums
2010	-	Michaela Maria Chircop	Clarinet
2010	-	Rebecca Abdilla	Kwartin
2011	-	Raffaela Baldacchino	Drums
2011	-	Terence Grech	Alto Sax
2012	-	Daniel Carabott	Euphonium
2013	-	Matthias Agius	Trumpet
2014	-	Peter Paul Caruana	Drums
2015	-	Yana Agius	Percussion
2016	-	Shaun Cardona	Clarinet
2016	-	Yazmine Carabott	Tenor Sax
2017	-	Andrea Borg	Trumpet
2018	-	Matthew Polidano	Tenor Sax
2019	-	Steve Abela	Trumpet
2019	-	Matthew Polidano	Euphonium
2019	-	Peter Paul Caruana	Trumpet

APPENDIX VI

AUDITORS OF THE SOCJETÀ FILARMONIKA SAN PIETRU, BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA

1990-2004 - Lino Paris

1990-1996 - Michael Schembri

1997-2005 - Jason Vella

2004 - Michael Schembri
 2006-2007 - Alfred Formosa
 2007-2010 - Henry Bonnici

2012-2017 - Derek Mifsud Speranza

2018 - Jason Vella

APPENDIX VII

LEGAL CONSULTANTS OF THE SOĆJETÀ FILARMONIKA SAN PIETRU, BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA

1990-1996 - Dr Jose Herrera
 1997-2020 - Dr Bernard Grech
 2003 - Dr Henry Antoncich

APPENDIX VIII

FUNERALS ORGANISED BY THE SOCJETÀ FILARMONIKA SAN PIETRU, BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA

2004 - Arthur Micallef
2006 - Alfrida Formosa
2011 - Grazio Pullicino
2012 - Alfred Formosa
2013 - Marco Vella
2018 - Raymond Cutajar

APPENDIX IX

MUSICAL SERVICES BY THE BANDA BIRŻEBBUĠA (EXCLUDING THOSE IN BIRŻEBBUĠA)

YEAR SERVICE

08.02.1992 - St Paul - Valletta -

14.06.1992 - Basketball Club celebrations - Rabat

13.08.1992 - St Mary – Gudja

04.01.1993 - Christmas service at Monte Karmeli Hospital – Attard

07.02.1993 - St Paul – Valletta28.05.1993 - St Joseph – Kirkop

01.07.1993 - March at the Trade Fair Grounds – Naxxar

11.07.1993 - Our Lady of Mount Carmel – Fgura

13.08.1993 - St Mary – Gudja 29.08.1993 - St Paul – Ħal Safi

07.02.1994 - St Paul – Valletta 13.08.1994 - St Mary – Gudja 07.02.1995 - St Paul – Belt Valletta

13.08.1995 - St Mary - Gudja

06.02.1996 - St Paul – Valletta

_

13.08.1996

29.01.1997 - St Paul – Valletta 03.08.1997 - St Mary – Gudja

07.02.1998 - St Paul - Valletta

19.07.1998 - Our Lady of Holy Doctrine – Tarxien

St Mary - Gudja

23.07.1998 - St Anne - Marsascala

07.08.1998 - Our Lady of Annunciation - Balzan

11.08.1998 - St Mary - Gudja

06.09.1998 - St Gregory the Great – Sliema

04.10.1998 - Our Lady of the Rosary – Gudja

- -

18.02.1999 - St Paul - Valletta

18.05.1999 - TV programme participation and march— Hamrun

02.06.1999 - St Joseph - Għaxaq

09.07.1999 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Balzan

21.07.1999 - St Anne - Marsascala

12.08.1999 - St Mary - Gudja

03.10.1999 - Our Lady of the Rosary - Gudja

19.12.1999 - Christmas - Valletta

_ .

07.02.2000 - St Paul - Valletta

19.02.2000 - 10th Anniversary Concert – Univesity of Malta

30.05.2000 - St Joseph – Għaxaq

25.06.2000 - Corpus Domini – Rabat

07.07.2020 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Balzan

11.08.2000 - St Mary - Gudja

07.02.2001 - St Paul - Valletta

31.05.2001 - St Joseph - Ghaxag

01.06.2001 - Our Lady of Liesse - Valletta

02.06.2001 - Corpus Domini – Rabat

10.07.2001 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Balzan

11.08.2001 - St Mary – Gudja

20.08.2001 - St Paul - Hal Safi

03.09.2001 - Our Lady of the Girdle - Gudja

26.01.2002 - St Paul - Valletta

30.05.2002 - St Joseph - Ghaxag

02.06.2002 - Corpus Domini – Rabat

10.07.2002 - Our Lady of Mount Carmel – Fgura

11.07.2002 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Balzan

11.08.2002 - St Mary – Gudja

21.08.2002 - St Paul - Hal Safi

31.08.2002 - Our Lady of the Girdle - Gudja

19.05.2003 - Our Lady of Annunciation— Tarxien

10.07.2003 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Balzan

11.08.2003 - St Mary – Gudja

27.08.2003 - St Paul - Hal Safi

09.09.2003 - Our Lady of Graces - Żabbar

19.03.2004 - Carnival - Hammamet, Tunisia

20.03.2004 - Carnival - Sousse, Tunisia

21.03.2004 - Carnival - Port El Kantaoui, Tunisia

08.07.2004 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Balzan

11.08.2004 - St Mary - Gudja

25.08.2004 - St Paul - Hal Safi

7.09.2004 - Our Lady of Graces – Żabbar

23.05.2005 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Tarxien

24.06.2005 - St Nicholas - Siģģiewi

10.07.2005 - St Joseph - Kalkara

11.08.2005 - St Mary - Gudja

24.08.2005 - St Paul - Hal Safi

28.08.2005 - St Julian - St Julian's

22.05.2006 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Tarxien

16.07.2006 - St Joseph - Kalkara

11.08.2006 - St Mary - Gudja

23.08.2006 - St Paul - Hal Safi

27.08.2006 - St Julian - St Julians

05.09.2006 - Our Lady of Graces - Żabbar

14.05.2007 - Our Lady of Annunciation-Tarxien

11.08.2007 - St Mary- Gudja

22.08.2007 - St Paul- Ħal Safi

18.05.2008 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Tarxien 11.08.2008 - St Mary – Gudja

19.08.2008 - Stella Maris – Sliema

26.08.2008 - St Paul - Hal Safi

17.05.2009 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Tarxien

11.08.2009 - St Mary – Gudja 18.08.2009 - Stella Maris – Sliema

27.08.2009 - St Paul - Hal Safi

05.04.2010 - Piazza Mignanelli - Rome

06.04.2010 - Basilica San Pietro in Vincoli - Rome

07.04.2010 - General Audience with Pope Benedict XVI - Vatican City, Rome

31.05.2010 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Tarxien

11.08.2010 - St Mary - Gudja

18.08.2010 - Stella Marija - Sliema

25.08.2010 - St Paul - Hal Safi

23.05.2011 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Tarxien

11.08.2011 - St Mary – Gudja

17.08.2011 - Stella Maris – Sliema

24.08.2011 - St Paul - Hal Safi

14.05.2012 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Tarxien

11.08.2012 - St Mary – Gudja

16.08.2012 - Stella Maris – Sliema

22.08.2012 - St Paul - Hal Safi

18.01.2013 - Musical Tuition for Young People in Band Clubs- University of Malta

17.05.2013 - Festa Komunità - Kirkop, St Benedict College

27.05.2013 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Tarxien

11.08.2013 - St Mary – Gudja

12.08.2013 - Stella Maris - Sliema

21.08.2013 - St Paul - Hal Safi

16.05.2014 - Festa Komunità - Kirkop, St Benedict College

26.05.2014 - Our Lady of Annunciation – Tarxien

11.08.2014 - St Mary – Gudja

31.08.2014 - St Paul - Hal Safi

15.03.2015 - Venetian March for St Patrick's Day - Floriana

15.05.2015 - Festa Komunità - Kirkop, St Benedict College

11.08.2015 - St Mary – Gudja 22.08.2015 - Stella Maris – Sliema

26.08.2015 - St Paul - Hal Safi 30.08.2015 - St Paul - Hal Safi

13.05.2016 - Festa Komunità - Kirkop, St Benedict College

14.05.2016 - St Augustine - Valletta

13.07.2016 - San Sebastjan - Qormi 11.08.2016 - St Mary – Gudja 28.08.2016 - St Paul - Hal Safi

14.10.2016 - Riposto - Sicily
 15.10.2016 - Riposto - Sicily
 16.10.2016 - Riposto - Sicily

12.11.2016 - Concert with the Banda Marija Mtellgħa s-Sema – Imġarr

04.12.2016 - Youth Village with the Band of Imgarr - Santa Venera

20.05.2017 - St Augustine – Valletta

26.06.2017 - St Peter and St Paul - Nadur

29.06.2017 - St Paul – Rabat 11.08.2017 - St Mary – Gudja 27.08.2017 - St Paul – Ħal Safi

06.10.2017 - Our Lady of the Girdle - Valletta

20.01.2018 - Valletta 18 - Valletta

24.02.2018 - A Night at the Cathedral – Imdina

01.06.2018 - St Joseph - Għaxaq

29.06.2018 - St Paul - Rabat

14.07.2018 - St Joseph – Kalkara

11.08.2018 - St Mary – Gudja 11.08.2018 - St Mary – Qrendi 26.08.2018 - St Paul – Ħal Safi

14.09.2018 - St Augustine - Valletta

04.11.2018 - Concert with the Banda Marija Mtellaha s-Sema – Imgarr

05.05.2019 - St Publius - Floriana

17.05.2019 - Concerto nella Capitale – Valletta

30.05.2019 - St Joseph - Ghaxaq

14.06.2019 - Concert with the Banda Marija Mtellgħa s-Sema – Imġarr

20.07.2019 - St Joseph – Kalkara 29.07.2019 - Christ the King - Paola

19.07.2020 - Our Lady of Holy Doctrine - Tarxien

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DISSERTATIONS

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L-Orizzont - December 1989 u January 1990 *In-Nazzjon Tagħna* — December 1989 u January 1990

Il-Mument – December 1989 u January 1990

It-Torċa – December 1989 u January 1990 Gauci Cunningham A. (2017); San Pietru rrestawrat se jivjaġġa fuq il-baħar bejn M'Xlokk u Birżebbuġa; taken from www. illum.com.mt, uploaded on the 20th of July 2017.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

All the minutes of the Annual General Meetings 1990-2021 All the minutes of the Central Committee meetings 1990-2020 Corrispondences with the Band Club